Citizen Participation

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CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

Bargaining over boundaries in the organization of care services

Ludo Glimmerveen

Hailed as a way to grant citizens more control over the services they use, advocates often portray citizen participation as a crucial ingredient for service improvement. At the same time, and despite widespread support for participation as a policy imperative, its pursuit often proves contentious. Critics consider participatory efforts to be something of a Trojan horse, noting they are often used to legitimize decisions that have already been made or to compensate for cutbacks in public spending.

In this doctoral thesis, Ludo Glimmerveen investigates how these disparate accounts of citizen participation—and the organizational practices associated with them—interact within concrete participatory efforts. Approaching participatory efforts as instances of boundary work, his research focuses on the inclusionary and exclusionary actions people use to open up or narrow down the space available for participation. How do participatory initiatives evolve as people bargain over participation's parameters?

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Ludo Glimmerveen

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Citizen Participation

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 CITIZEN PARTICIPATION'S AMBIGUOUS APPRAISAL

There is something peculiar about citizen participation. While it receives broad support as a pathway for public service reform, it also remains highly controversial. To illustrate its ambiguous appraisal, let us consider two of the competing narratives that permeate current debates on the subject.

On the one hand, citizen participation is broadly welcomed as a crucial ingredient for public service improvement (Callaghan & Wistow, 2006; Marent, Forster, & Nowak, 2015). Within both academic and policy debates, it is seen as a remedy for public services that have become too bureaucratic, supply-driven and paternalistic (Needham, 2008; Nies, 2014). Advocates stress participation's potential to put citizens 'back in control' of the services they (may) use while—added bonus—potentially curbing these services' rising costs. Resonating positively within liberal, communitarian and social-democratic political agendas (Van Houwelingen, Boele, & Dekker, 2014), citizen participation is often treated as something intrinsically desirable (Contandriopoulos, 2004). At its best, it would 'enable society to create better collective solutions with a less coercive, intrusive state, a lower tax burden, a more responsible and engaged citizenry and stronger capacity within civil society to find and devise solutions to problems without state intervention' (Leadbeater, 2004, p. 88). Given this perspective, the current focus on citizen participation within policy making should be—and often is—embraced.

On the other hand, and despite such widespread support, pursuits of citizen participation often prove to be contentious when abstract policy imperatives are translated into concrete organizing practices. Critics regularly view participatory efforts as something of a Trojan horse. Despite their empowering and democratizing appearance, such efforts are often seen as a means of legitimizing decisions that have already been made or to compensate for cutbacks in public spending (Fotaki, 2011; Lee & Romano, 2013). Moreover, participatory initiatives allow both public and private actors to make use of citizens' 'free' labour

(Ward-Griffin & Marshall, 2003)—in essence 'enlisting the public to execute the government's agenda' (Verhoeven & Tonkens, 2013). As such, participation is also seen as a cunning neoliberal strategy, engaging citizens for instrumental purposes only. Given this perspective, policy makers' current preoccupation with citizen participation warrants considerable scepticism.

How should we make sense of such competing narratives?

In this doctoral thesis, I investigate how these disparate accounts of citizen participation manifest within concrete participatory efforts. In particular, I examine how employees of professional long-term care organizations in the Netherlands, together with their colleagues and participating citizens, deal with their organizations' policy ambitions to create more space for such participation. By focusing on the long-term care sector in the Netherlands, this study explores how participatory efforts unfold within a vast, complex and highly regulated field that encompasses a diverse range of (semi-)public and private actors (Kroneman et al., 2016; Nies, 2014)—each potentially having a different perspective on what participation may entail. As I will elaborate on in this thesis, participation may both challenge established ways of organizing care services and alter relationships between actors in the field. By scrutinizing citizen-participation efforts within the long-term care sector, this study contributes to our understanding of why participation may cause friction, how such friction is dealt with, and how such responses shape the direction in which participatory efforts unfold.

Moving away from clear-cut normative definitions of what citizen participation is or should be (Contandriopoulos, 2004), I will approach participation as an emergent and contentious organizational phenomenon. Zooming in on how employees and citizens jointly translate abstract policy ambitions into concrete participatory practices, I investigate their negotiations over competing notions of 'appropriate' participation. At the same time, I also zoom out to show how such practices are shaped by actors' various positions of power, normative dispositions and (shared or competing) interests—demonstrating that participation is a phenomenon deeply embedded within other organizational dynamics. By definition, pursuits of participation challenge the boundaries through which actors in the long-term care sector structure not only their relationships, but also their activities relating to the governance and delivery of care services. Who exactly participates (and who does not)? What is this participation about (and what

lies beyond its scope)? And how does citizen participation relate to the 'internal' organizational practices (e.g., decision-making processes) that participants set out to influence? Scrutinizing the processes in which such boundaries are negotiated, contested, transgressed or defended, I analyse how participatory efforts gradually take shape. (In section 1.5, I present my research questions in more detail.)

In sum, this doctoral thesis generates insights that help us grasp the elusive character of citizen participation—explaining why it sometimes turns out to be a pathway towards democratizing public services while at other times functioning as an instrument in the pursuit of predetermined agendas. It reveals the delicate power dynamics that, I contend, are intrinsic to participatory practices. Too often, these power dynamics remain obscured or become simplified in accounts that treat participation as a panacea for public service improvement or, alternatively, as a cynical attempt to co-opt citizens.

By analyzing citizen participation efforts as instances of boundary work—i.e., by focusing on the processes in which people (re-)construct meaningful demarcations as they negotiate the parameters of participation—my thesis makes a broader theoretical contribution to our understanding of organizational insider-outsider dynamics. In particular, my research shows how attempts at 'transcending' established organizational divides in fact turn boundaries into symbolic rallying points as actors try to reconstruct insider-outsider relations. Ironically, I will show that pursuits of more 'inclusive' modes of organizing tend to increase the salience of organizational divides, triggering actors to make these divides explicit. Before elaborating on the theoretical foundations of my dissertation, however, let me first turn to the literature on its empirical focus: citizen participation.

1.2 MAKING SENSE OF CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

In this section, I discuss a number of key contributions to the extant literature on citizen participation. First, I outline how these perspectives have shaped my own approach in which I treat participation as an emergent and contentious organizational process. In an effort to grasp the disparate ways in which citizen participation is pursued within concrete participatory initiatives, I refrain from

providing strict operational definitions that delineate which practices do or do not qualify as participation. Nevertheless, it is possible to define some key aspects of how my approach builds on or, alternatively, departs from the extant literature.

How can we make sense of the eclectic collection of literature on citizen participation? What emerges most clearly is the 'conceptual muddle' surrounding the issue of participation (Marent et al., 2015). Research has built on a variety of concepts and theoretical entry points to investigate citizens' active contributions to the governance and delivery of services—e.g., co-production (Ewert & Evers, 2014; Needham, 2008), participatory governance (Durose, 2011) and public participation (Marent et al., 2015; Martin, 2008a). In practice, the boundaries between such different notions remain ambiguous. Scholars have highlighted these concepts' 'excessive elasticity' (Needham, 2008, p. 224) and 'infinitely malleable' character (Cornwall, 2008). Because citizen participation 'relates to different categories of lay people, serves different functions, involves different issues and implies different forms and methods of implementation' (Marent et al., 2015, p. 828), it 'can easily be reframed to meet almost any demand made of it' (Cornwall, 2008, p. 269). Being something of a catch-all concept, it is not surprising that citizen participation resonates so well within many different political agendas (Van Houwelingen et al., 2014), nor is it surprising how often it remains fiercely debated when translated into concrete participatory practices (Kenny, Farmer, Dickson-Swift, & Hyett, 2015).

Various authors have attempted to provide more conceptual clarity by disambiguating different types of participation. By developing typologies to characterize it along one or more dimensions, these scholars have helped organize the vast range of meanings, approaches and practices that have been given the label of citizen participation. In what follows, I will zoom in both on two influential examples of such typologies and on scholars' critiques of these.

To begin, for decades Sherry Arnstein's ladder of citizen participation (Arnstein, 1969) has served as a central frame of reference in debates regarding citizens' active contributions to the governance of public services. Arnstein distinguishes between eight 'rungs' of participation, each of which progressively redistributes power to citizens. By differentiating the varying degrees of 'tokenistic' or, alternatively, 'genuine' participation, her model raised awareness of the 'critical difference between going through the empty ritual of participation

and having the real power needed to affect the outcome of the process' (Arnstein, 1969, p. 216). Arnstein's work highlights the political nature of participatory practices: they are not a neutral or merely technical exercise, but reflect and affect the power dynamics between 'traditional power elites' and those people targeted by public services. Having been extremely well cited within the academic literature (with over 20,000 citations on Google Scholar) and frequently adopted by a broad range of policy makers and practitioners, Arnstein's ladder has greatly influenced how we think about participation.

At the same time, Arnstein's model has received considerable critique (Contandriopoulos, 2004; Tritter & McCallum, 2006). Most critiques revolve around its one-dimensional conceptualization of participation (as the ladder's rungs move from 'manipulation' up to 'citizen control') and its normative assumption that the more 'genuine' involvement of citizens is inherently desirable and leads to more responsive services. Challenging this assumption, Tritter and McCallum (2006) demonstrate that more involvement does not necessarily equal empowerment. For example, they discuss that while the transfer of responsibilities to a local voluntary organization can be seen as a form of 'delegated power', the second highest rung on Arnstein's ladder, this transfer does not inherently guarantee the responsiveness of established institutions. In fact, such participation may actually contribute to institutional actors' disengagement from citizens' activities—effectively serving efficiency measures rather than empowerment (Tritter & McCallum, 2006). Echoing this critique, a growing strand of critical research reminds us that the desirability of participatory practices is contested and should not be indiscriminately assumed (Contandriopoulos, 2004; Lee & Romano, 2013).

Originating in the field of public administration, a second and more recent influential framework is Archon Fung's 'democracy cube' (Fung, 2006, 2015). Instead of a one-dimensional ladder, Fung presents a three-dimensional model that provides an overview of the various design choices faced by policy makers and managers when pursuing participation. First, he points to the challenge of finding and engaging an appropriate set of participants: 'Who is eligible to participate, and how do individuals become participants?' (Fung, 2006, p. 67). A second question concerns the modes through which participants are engaged within policy discussions or decision-making processes. For example, are they engaged as an audience at public hearings or community meetings? Or do they

participate on a deliberative platform where they can interactively 'figure out what they want individually and as a group' (Fung, 2006, p. 69)? Fung's third and last dimension concerns the relationship between participants and the decision-making processes they set out to influence. Are participants granted a degree of actual control over the process and its outcomes and, if so, how does that look? By elaborating on these three dimensions, Fung's framework provides guidance to policy makers and managers within their participatory efforts.

Despite its practical value, however, Fung's democracy cube turns a blind eye to the emergent and contentious dynamics of participatory processes. While, on the one hand, the framework functions as a helpful managerial tool by informing policy makers of their various design options, on the other hand this focus on design also constitutes its main weakness. By delineating how 'particular designs are suited to specific objectives' (Fung, 2006, p. 74), Fung takes a functionalist approach to participation. As such, he presents a managerialist account of the dilemmas surrounding participatory efforts, disregarding how the rationale for and objectives of participation often remain contested among the actors involved (Cornwall, 2008; Pedersen & Johannsen, 2016). Another case in point is Fung's treatment of authority and power as 'important dimension[s] of design' (Fung, 2006, p. 69). His framework presents 'five categories of institutionalized influence and authority' (Fung, 2006, p. 69), each of which may be granted to an initiative's participants. By treating power relations as a 'design choice', however, Fung effectively obscures the emergent power dynamics that shape participants' influence. Given the considerable amount of research demonstrating the significance of such dynamics, this is problematic. Questions around 'who participates', for example, cannot be simply answered as a matter of design choice or through formal selection criteria. Several studies have shown that legitimate representation and participation are the outcomes of a political struggle in which different actors claim to speak for a designated constituency (Barnes, Newman, Knops, & Sullivan, 2003; Contandriopoulos, Denis, & Langley, 2004). By disregarding such processes, approaches like Fung's miss out on some of the key dynamics of citizen participation. Likewise, and somewhat ironically, these approaches restrain the agency of participating citizens by turning them into the passive subjects of top-down participatory efforts.

In my current approach to citizen participation, I attempt to build on

elements of Arnstein's and Fung's frameworks while also incorporating these critiques. While sharing Arnstein's interest in the varying degrees of redistributed power within different types of participation, I refrain from the assumption that 'more' participation is inherently better. Furthermore, while my approach resonates with Fung's multidimensional approach of participation—as I will explain in more detail below—I do not treat these dimensions as a foundation for 'design choices' (Fung, 2006, p. 70). Instead, I treat such dimensions as contentious areas in which people bargain over boundaries when negotiating the scope and concrete parameters of participatory initiatives. Following more critical approaches in the field (e.g., Barnes et al., 2003; Contandriopoulos, 2004; Martin, 2008a), I set out to study participation as a contentious and emergent issue—approaching it as an organizational phenomenon that challenges established insider-outsider divides in the governance and delivery of care services.

1.3 MY FOCUS: DEMARCATING SPACE FOR PARTICIPATION

If we indeed treat citizen participation as an emergent and contentious issue, where, then, should our study begin? While addressing a broad range of issues—e.g., institutional change (Kellogg, 2009), innovation (Furnari, 2014), participatory governance (Taylor, 2007) and accounting (Brown & Dillard, 2015)—organizational scholars have suggested a focus on cross-boundary 'spaces' in order to capture the interactions of 'insiders' and 'outsiders' as they work together, engage in arguments, align their actions and/or reconfigure their relationships and mutual responsibilities. In their reflections on participatory accounting, Brown and Dillard (2015) discuss how actors open up and close down participatory spaces as they negotiate the scope of external stakeholders' involvement within an organization's governance practices. In this doctoral thesis, the emergence of—and contestation over—such spaces for participation act as a focal point of my investigations.

Within my current thesis, I define participatory spaces as the platforms on which citizens and employees of care-providing or governing organizations come together to discuss issues of mutual interest and (their involvement in) service governance and delivery. These spaces can be virtual or physical (Kellogg, 2009) and can host either one-off encounters or provide a more recurrent infrastructure for exchange. As a site for interaction, participatory spaces may

constitute more-or-less tangible platforms, but they are also significant from a theoretical point of view. Because the particular way in which such spaces are 'designed, implemented and interpreted can [not only] have a profound impact on how different stakeholder interests are affected' (Brown & Dillard, 2015, p. 969) but also shape the relationships between the people acting in them, (Cornwall, 2004; Kellogg, 2009) these spaces are subjected to ongoing negotiation and contestation. Moreover, by examining how participatory spaces are embedded within their broader organizational surroundings, it becomes possible to investigate whether or not participatory efforts have an impact beyond the space in which they are situated (Cornwall, 2004; Taylor, 2007). Following actors as they move in and out of a participatory space helps us understand the extent to which local participatory efforts 'matter' (Yanow, 2004) to other actors and within other organizational settings. In sum, by zooming in on participatory spaces, we can generate the empirical groundwork necessary for investigating the concrete interactions that constitute how participation is 'done' in practice. By then zooming out—capturing how these local interactions are situated within their broader organization setting—we can shed light on how participatory efforts both reflect and affect other organizational processes, i.e., whether they have any bearing outside their immediate context. Together, these two approaches help us understand how citizens' relations to other organizational actors are (or are not) altered as a result of their participatory endeavours.

To investigate how participatory spaces are established, negotiated and transformed, I will particularly focus on how people bargain over boundaries as they demarcate citizen participation's concrete parameters within three areas: (1) what participation is about, (2) who is allowed to participate and (3) how their participation affects the organizational practices they set out to influence. While resembling the three dimensions of Fung's democracy cube as discussed earlier, my approach conceptualizes these areas in a markedly different way. Instead of treating them as the focus of design choices, I approach them as areas of contention that are gradually being shaped within 'messy socio-political processes' (Heracleous, 2004, p. 101). I will discuss these three areas in more detail below.

The 'what' of participation The first key area of contention revolves around the 'what' of participation: what do people consider an appropriate domain

for citizen participation? In what role are citizens cast? What exactly is the nature of their engagement and which issues do or do not fall within its scope? Extant literature describes at least three qualitatively different ways in which citizens may contribute. First, citizens are often seen as an important source of care provision. Scholars have shown that the majority of long-term care and support is not provided by professionals but by relatives, volunteers or other informal caregivers (De Boer, Broese van Groenou, & Timmermans, 2009; Nies, 2014)—not to mention by care users themselves (Mol, 2008; Morgan et al., 2017). Second, citizens may participate as lay experts, contributing their situation-specific and experiential knowledge to improve the organization of care. By sharing their insights, citizens can enable professionals, managers and policy makers to tailor available services to the particular situations of an individual or, on a more collective level, a client population. Third, citizens can participate as governance partners, gaining a degree of control over the services they (or their loved ones) may potentially use. The degree of such control may vary, ranging from the ability to influence highly restricted, government or provider-initiated decision-making processes and seemingly trivial choices (e.g., being able to pick the—whether or not proverbial—colour of the wallpaper) to taking full ownership of the provision of local care services; the latter of which, for example, has been done by several rural-based citizen cooperatives in the Netherlands (Nies & Minkman, 2015; Van Der Klein, Stavenuiter, & Smits van Waesberghe, 2013). Facing a vast range of ways in which citizens may potentially participate, actors often disagree on which form and scope of engagement is most appropriate within a given situation (Cornwall, 2008; Fotaki, 2011; Pedersen & Johannsen, 2016). By explicitly accounting for how such disagreement is dealt with, I move beyond the one-dimensional (Arnstein, 1969) and managerialist (Fung, 2006) frameworks that conceal such diversity. In this thesis, I will demonstrate how actors' diverse orientations play out as they negotiate over the space that is available for participation.

The 'who' of participation Second, and in addition to the 'what', my analysis asks: who participates within citizen participation initiatives? Policy discourses promoting participation often refer to 'citizens', 'the community' or 'the public' in rather abstract and ill-defined ways (Contandriopoulos et al., 2004; Kenny et al., 2015; Martin, 2008a). Within concrete participatory efforts, however, actors face the challenge of demarcating a specific set of participants, often

(self-)selected to purportedly represent a broader constituency. In other words, in order to participate citizens need to be 'constituted as actors' (Barnes et al., 2003, p. 396). While scholars have demonstrated that actors' claims to speak on behalf of a designated population or 'the public at large' are subject to fervent political struggles (e.g., Contandriopoulos et al., 2004), functionalist accounts of participation still tend to obscure such political dynamics (e.g., Fung, 2006; Marent et al., 2015). In this thesis, I will generate insight into the contentious processes through which a given set of participants gradually emerges and is legitimized.

Participation's impact Third, once citizens engage in participation, to what extent are they able to influence how services are organized? Are citizens' voices being heard beyond the immediate platforms on which they participate? Are their concerns considered when decisions are made that affect the delivery of care? Answering these questions requires scholars to scrutinize how citizen participation is linked—both formally and informally—to an organization's 'internal' governance dynamics. In their work, employees of care-providing or governing organizations may move back and forth between platforms for participation and other 'internal' organizational spaces such as, e.g., a work team or managerial board. As a result, they have the opportunity to make sure that their interactions with citizens are indeed considered on different platforms and affect how services are organized. Alternatively, when such connections are ineffective or not made at all, citizen participation may seem productive when observing the platforms on which it takes place but may fail to have any further impact. In this thesis, I therefore explicitly focus on such potential (dis)connections: to what extent are citizens' concerns actually 'taken forward' across the organizational hierarchy and considered within decision-making processes?

Building on these three angles, this doctoral thesis investigates how local citizens and employees of professional provider organizations negotiate the emergence, parameters and significance of concrete pursuits of citizen participation in long-term care. Before moving on to a more elaborate discussion of my research questions and the empirical context in which I conducted my study, I will first provide a theoretical foundation for my investigations. In doing so, I treat citizen participation as a process of inclusion and exclusion. Who participates and who does not? On which issues are participants engaged and which remain

off-limits? And to what extent is participant input included and considered in 'internal' decision-making processes? When demarcating the parameters of their initiatives, both citizens and employees of care-providing (or other) organizations negotiate, contest, transgress and defend various boundaries. In order to gain a deeper understanding of such dynamics, I will now discuss the existing scholarship on organizational boundaries and boundary work. Next, I will conceptualize these notions in a way that accounts for their processual, dispersed and political dynamics, allowing me to investigate how actors gradually and interactively demarcate citizens' changing positions within the governance and delivery of care.

1.4 THEORETICAL APPROACH: CITIZEN PARTICIPATION AS BOUNDARY WORK

In order to investigate professional organizations' pursuits of citizen participation, this doctoral thesis addresses the relationship between alleged 'insiders' and 'outsiders' in the field of long-term care. Instead of seeing such insider and outsider statuses as stable and clear-cut, a growing body of literature has studied the socially constructed and contentious nature of these categorizations. Theoretically, a focus on boundaries and boundary work has proven to be a fruitful approach for studying how insider-outsider relationships are negotiated and reconstructed over time (e.g., Vakkayil, 2012; Wright, 2009; Zietsma & Lawrence, 2010). In this section, I discuss the extant scholarship on boundaries and lay the conceptual groundwork for approaching participation as a process of boundary work. Conceptualizing boundaries as emergent and contentious phenomena (Abbott, 1995; Heracleous, 2004; Sturdy, Handley, Clark, & Fincham, 2009), I try to move beyond overly parsimonious accounts of boundary processes and to untangle the messiness and contradictions that characterize unfolding efforts at citizen participation.

Before zooming in on the concepts of boundaries and boundary work, I want to provide some background on the processual ontology that I adopt in my research. Instead of seeing change or instability as an extraordinary state of organization, a process ontology begins by assuming the ever-present possibility of change (Tsoukas & Chia, 2002). In terms of my study, this means that organizations

are in a perpetual state of 'becoming'. While people do structure their everyday organizational lives by drawing on abstract categories (e.g., 'participation', 'professionalism', 'quality', 'roles', etc.), we must be careful not to assume the stability of these categories across disparate spaces or to disconnect them from the processes in which they are created (Bakken & Hernes, 2006; Tsoukas & Chia, 2002). Instead, by taking a process-based view, I acknowledge the emergent and contentious nature of the categories through which people organize the world around them. This means that I try to move beyond essentialist accounts of boundaries as things that are objectively and unequivocally 'out there'. Instead, I set out to capture the dynamics of actors' potentially contradictory boundary enactments as they negotiate the concrete parameters of citizen engagement.

1.4.1 On boundaries

Traditionally, organizational scholars have used the concept of boundaries to refer to the demarcation between an organization and the environment in which it operates. Aldrich and Herker (1977), for example, state how it is possible to draw a boundary around an organization to make a distinction between its members and non-members. In the same vein, boundaries are often treated as a legal demarcation—e.g., between activities taking place within the organizational hierarchy and those taking place within the market in which an organization operates (Heracleous, 2004; Santos & Eisenhardt, 2005). Treating boundaries as relatively clear-cut demarcations between social systems and their external environments, these and similar conceptualizations have greatly influenced how relations between organizations and their environments have been studied.

More recently, however, various scholars (e.g., Abbott, 1995; Sturdy, Handley, et al., 2009; Vakkayil, 2012) have tried to move beyond such 'socially and organizationally unproblematic' accounts of boundaries, critiquing them for being 'parsimonious to the point of reductionism, caricaturing complex phenomena' (Heracleous, 2004, pp. 95, 96). To be able to grasp the dynamics of an organization's relation to its environment, scholars need to 'soften' the idea of a boundary as a pronounced distinction between two separate entities, as 'organization and environment [...] permeate one another both cognitively and relationally – that is, both in the minds of actors and in the process of conducting relationships between the two' (Child, 1997, p. 58). Especially given

the claim that contemporary organizing involves increasingly porous and fluid organizational boundaries (Hirschhorn & Gilmore, 1992; Kellogg, Orlikowski, & Yates, 2006; Vakkayil, 2012), studying the relation between organizations and their environments requires a more sophisticated conceptualization of boundaries—a conceptualization that accounts for the ambiguous, dynamic and shifting character of the organization-environment relationship. This redirects our focus from seeing boundaries as clear-cut properties of organizations towards studying the nature of boundaries themselves and the dynamics that their construction gives rise to (Abbott, 1995). To help us better appreciate their complexities, I will now turn our attention to two key aspects of boundaries: (1) their multiplicities and (2) their socially constructed nature.

First, many authors point out how boundaries are composite as opposed to singular or homogeneous demarcations (Sturdy, Fincham, & Handley, 2009). Actors always 'operate within multiple sets of co-existing boundaries' (Hernes, 2004 in Vakkayil, 2012, p. 204). People continuously make demarcations and make sense of differences on various dimensions—e.g., by separating 'us' from 'them' (Tilly, 2004), the legitimate from the illegitimate and the acceptable from the unacceptable (Heracleous, 2004). Several authors have tried to organize such different dimensions into meaningful categories. Santos and Eisenhardt (2005), for example, distinguish the different types of boundaries that structure an organization's relation to its environment. They identify boundaries of efficiency (referring to managers' decisions as to whether or not activities should be taken up within the organization), power (referring to an organization's sphere of influence), competence (referring to an organization's resources) and identity (referring to 'who we are' as an organization). While the value and appropriateness of such frameworks depend on the particularities of the phenomena under study, Santos and Eisenhardt's and other scholars' (Hernes, 2004; Hirschhorn & Gilmore, 1992) categorizations of boundary types illustrate the multitude of ways in which people make demarcations. Given that such different boundaries interact and shape one another over time, they must also be treated as complementary, co-evolutionary and synergetic (Santos & Eisenhardt, 2005). In other words, in order to untangle the complex dynamics that arise from a multiplicity of boundaries, we must move away from the idea that boundaries act as singular, clear-cut demarcations between an organization and its environment.

Second, in order to grasp the dynamics through which boundaries affect the structure of organizational life, we must account for their socially constructed nature. Abbott, for example, describes boundaries as 'sites of difference' that become meaningful and salient as 'local interaction gradually tosses up stable properties defining two "sides"' (Abbott, 1995, p. 863). From this perspective, rather than being properties of pre-existing entities, boundaries are actively and continuously constructed and reconstructed throughout actors' everyday interactions. The socially constructed nature of boundaries, however, does not mean that they do not have a constraining effect on people's behaviour. Rather, they reflect the duality of structure and agency (Zietsma & Lawrence, 2010). Boundaries have structuring potential and, as such, are reflected in recurring patterns of action. Still the 'study of boundaries cannot afford to ignore the messy socio-political processes that lead to particular organizational arrangements that are later perceived to be stable and "real"' (Heracleous, 2004, p. 101). By approaching boundaries as both constructed and constraining, we are called to investigate how people create boundaries through their actions while, at the same time, boundaries condition people's actions (Zietsma & Lawrence, 2010).

To untangle boundaries' constructed-yet-constraining character, Lamont and Molnár (2002) make a useful distinction between social and symbolic boundaries. By reviewing the various conceptual uses of boundaries across the social sciences, the authors identified a common 'search for understanding the role of symbolic resources (e.g., conceptual distinctions, interpretive strategies, cultural traditions) in creating, maintaining, contesting, or even dissolving institutionalized social differences' (Lamont & Molnár, 2002, p. 168). They refer to symbolic boundaries as being people's mental categorizations that are reflected in, for example, stereotypes, feelings of similarity or ideas of group membership. Social boundaries, on the other hand, refer to 'objectified forms of social differences manifested in unequal access to and unequal distribution of resources (material and nonmaterial) and social opportunities [which] are also revealed in stable behavioral patterns of association' (Lamont & Molnár, 2002, p. 168). To give an example in the context of our current study: employees' ideas about what is and is not part of their organization's identity and its strategic mandate (symbolic boundaries) may be reflected in decisions about who is granted a 'seat at the table' as a partner in decision-making processes (social boundaries). Symbolic

and social boundaries, according to Lamont and Molnár, 'should be viewed as equally real' (2002, p. 169), but exist on different levels.

While Lamont and Molnár do not elaborate on the philosophical implications of their distinction between social and symbolic boundaries, some reflection is appropriate. The idea of social boundaries as 'objectified' social differences alludes to a conception of social reality as being 'out there'. Alternatively, symbolic boundaries exist at the intersubjective level as conceptual distinctions 'by which individuals and groups struggle over and come to agree upon definitions of reality' (Lamont & Molnár, 2002, p. 168). In other words, while social boundaries refer to observable patterns that are in and of themselves void of meaning, symbolic boundaries capture the '"semantic dimension" of human behavior—its symbolic or expressive aspect' (Fay, 1996, p. 113). By acknowledging their symbolic as well as material dimensions, it becomes possible to interpretatively study boundary processes without denying their material foundations or consequences. The meaning of an observable relational pattern (e.g., being physically excluded from a meeting) only emerges as people interpret it and draw upon their own mental categorizations while doing so (e.g., not being taken seriously). Consequently, as particular observations may be interpreted differently by different people, meanings vary across interpretative audiences (Fay, 1996). As such, boundary processes are inherently ambiguous as they intersect multiple actors' social worlds. Hence, grasping the meaning of a boundary enactment requires researchers to take into account various interpretations of such an act; including, but not limited to, the intentions of the actor by which it is performed (Fay, 1996).

Indeed, in his review of studies on boundary processes within organizations, Vakkayil (2012) points to the diverse intentions and implications of people's boundary enactments. He shows that boundaries can be made to function as protective shells by actors trying to protect 'their own' domain by imposing barriers that prevent designated outsiders from interfering (also see Bartel, 2001). However, boundaries can also be approached as sites of connectivity. By processing information across boundaries, people may attempt to align their own actions with the actions of others—a process generally referred to as boundary spanning (Aldrich & Herker, 1977). In short, while people may try to connect and align their own activities with the activities of 'outsiders', they may

also—even simultaneously—seek to protect their own turf from those very same actors (Vakkayil, 2012).

To summarize, while boundaries are socially constructed they also, often simultaneously, act as constraining structures that organize people's behaviour. They are mental constructs, existing on an intersubjective level, but they may have 'very real consequences' (Heracleous, 2004, p. 95) in terms of social patterns of separation, exclusion, communication, exchange, bridging or inclusion. Boundaries are also multiple—they may be interpreted in various ways and they may hold contradictory behavioural implications. As a result, boundaries provide a fruitful conceptual entry point for investigating the sometimes-paradoxical relationships and interactions between designated organizational insiders and outsiders. Within the context of this dissertation, an analytical focus on boundaries helps explain the convoluted organizational processes that arise when employees of care-providing or governing organizations engage with citizens. To better understand such dynamics, we should go beyond merely identifying the fact that boundary processes are complex. We should scrutinize how actors actually deal with their multiplicity and ambiguity. As a first step in this direction, I now turn to the literature on boundary work, which addresses the actions through which people are seen to be 'creating, expanding, reinforcing, crossing, blurring, opening, permeating, undermining or disrupting' boundaries (Helfen, 2015, p. 1390). In what follows I discuss this literature and, in particular, suggest the merits of taking a dialectical approach to boundary work—i.e., I focus on how actors respond to the contradictions and tensions that emerge as a result of people's plural, incongruent and ambiguous boundary enactments.

1.4.2 On boundary work

Taking the socially constructed nature of boundaries as a starting point, many scholars have scrutinized the relational dimensions of processes of organizational change and stability (Helfen, 2015; Llewellyn, 1998; Zietsma & Lawrence, 2010). By focusing on how people (re-)construct meaningful demarcations, Gieryn's (1983) seminal paper on the social construction of science introduced the concept of boundary work. It referred to the rhetorical practices with which scientists demarcate scientific from non-scientific activities and thereby justify their claims to authority. Since its publication, the concept has been applied to numerous

other fields in order to study people's efforts to establish, transgress, reinforce or undermine boundaries as they attempt, e.g., to protect their own autonomy, to challenge established institutional arrangements or to adapt to their environment. Focusing on actors' boundary work has proven to be a rewarding approach for studying how members of an organization or team relate to designated 'outsiders'.

Within the field of organization studies, Zietsma and Lawrence (2010) provided one of the most influential examples of a boundary-work approach. Empirically building on a study of harvesting practices in Canadian forestry, they developed a process model that explains change and stability within an organizational field. Drawing on institutional theory, the authors investigated how actors simultaneously and interactively performed different types of boundary work, either aimed at boundary closing, connecting and breaching. As insiders and outsiders shift from one form of boundary work to another, the authors concluded, they may affect the 'state' of a fields' boundaries (e.g., the boundaries may be 'intact', 'compromised' or 'repaired'). The changing states of boundaries helps explain why organizational fields move between cycles of relative stability, conflict, innovation and restabilization. By illuminating these dynamics, Zietsma and Lawrence's framework significantly contributes to our understanding of organizational and field-level processes of change and stability.

When we scrutinize their theoretical framework in detail, however, Zietsma and Lawrence's conceptualization of boundaries echoes an overly realist approach. They treat boundaries as if they are objectively 'out there', i.e., as real things that people can 'work on'. By doing so, they run the risk of concealing the ambiguous and contentious nature of boundaries and its implications for insider-outsider dynamics. For example, Zietsma and Lawrence unproblematically refer to boundaries 'around the field' (p. 208) and 'around experimental spaces' (p. 202) while viewing the 'state' of boundaries as an explanation for change or stability. With such remarks, the authors allude to the existence of relatively singular boundaries that act as clear-cut demarcations between an inside and an outside. This limits the analytical space available to account for the liminal, ambiguous and contentious positions in which organizational actors may reside (Garsten, 1999). Within the field of management consultancy, for example, Wright has demonstrated the ambiguous status of internal consultants—acting 'within the organization but also separate from it' (Wright, 2009, p. 310). In addition, Alvesson

et al. (2009) highlighted the conflicting ways in which actors within a single organization may construct their organization's relationship with consultants. Zietsma and Lawrence's framework risks concealing such diversity, leading to somewhat-monolithic views of organizational units and their environments (Alvesson et al., 2009; Baxter & Montgomery, 1996). When they speak of a 'field's common meaning system' (p.191) and the typical boundary work performed by insiders and outsiders, Zietsma and Lawrence portray such insiders and outsiders as relatively homogeneous groups. This downplays the multiplicity of perspectives that can be found within groups of actors—e.g., within and between employees of different organizational departments. It is precisely this multiplicity, however, that may significantly affect the shape, direction and outcomes of the processes we are trying to study (Buchanan & Dawson, 2007). Consequently, in order to account for these dynamics, I have cultivated an approach to boundary work that is better able to capture the heterogeneity and ambiguity of people's boundary enactments.

1.4.3 Dealing with competing boundary enactments

Our challenge here is to better grasp the implications of actors' disparate, shifting and often-contradictory orientations towards boundaries and how these affect insider-outsider relationships over time (Alvesson et al., 2009; Buchanan & Dawson, 2007; Delbridge & Edwards, 2007; Heracleous, 2004). To improve my ability to do so, I have found it useful to connect my discussion of boundary work to the theoretical discussion of Baxter and Montgomery (1996) on dialectics. By viewing social life as a 'dynamic knot of contradictions, a ceaseless interplay between contrary or opposing tendencies' (Baxter & Montgomery, 1996, p. 3), dialectical approaches such as theirs assume the inconsistency of the social world in which people act and use that as an analytical point of departure. Seo and Creed, for example, discuss how people's social worlds are 'composed of multiple, interpenetrating social structures operating at multiple levels and in multiple sectors', whereby 'linkages among the components are neither complete nor coherent' (Seo & Creed, 2002, p. 225). Such accounts assert that people always act within a 'polyphony of dialectical voices [that] struggle against each other to be heard' (Baxter & Montgomery, 1996, p. 4). Likewise, dialectical perspectives tend to characterize social reality as an ongoing dialogue between

multiple opposing tendencies that actors need to 'act into'. Consequently, such perspectives are generally 'destructive of neat systems and ordered structures, and compatible with the notion of a social universe that has neither fixity or solid boundaries' (Murphy, 1971 in Baxter & Montgomery, 1996, p. 23). In other words, a dialectical approach does not 'search for "shared meanings" and homeostatic "solutions" [...], but instead [focuses] on the messier, less logical, and more inconsistent unfolding practices of the moment' (Baxter & Montgomery, 1996, p. 46).

My approach to boundary work is inspired by this work on dialectics, drawing my attention to the contradictions that emerge from people's plural, incongruent and ambiguous boundary enactments and how such contradictions are dealt with within actors' everyday organizational practices. Recall, for example, our earlier discussion of how boundaries may be treated both as potential protective shells or sites of connection (Vakkayil, 2012). When facing the contradictory imperatives of on the one hand pursuing internal stability within their organization while on the other hand also being responsive to external developments, organizational actors may be pushed to approach boundaries both as protective shells and as sites of connection. Some actors may try to advance one of these imperatives in particular as they, for example, prioritize internal stability over external alignment while other colleagues might pursue the opposite (Baxter & Montgomery, 1996; Seo & Creed, 2002). As a result, actors may enact incompatible boundaries when attempting to engage with citizens, e.g., by considering different actors to be legitimate participants or by having different views on an appropriate scope of these participants' engagement. How actors deal with such contradictions constitutes a key focus of my research project.

Within the rest of this dissertation, I will adopt and develop an approach to boundary work that explicitly accounts for people's competing boundary enactments and how responses to these affect the evolution of boundary processes. Considering the disparate orientations and considerations that tend to co-exist and collide within individual pursuits of participation (Cornwall, 2008), my empirical focus on citizen participation provides fertile ground for conducting such investigations. Building on my empirical analyses, I will especially elaborate on the theoretical background and contributions of my approach in Chapter 3, in which I highlight the processual, dispersed and political character of actors'

boundary work.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In my research, I strive to shed light on the relational processes triggered by organizational actors' pursuits of the active engagement of alleged outsiders. Accordingly, I investigate the processes in which people bargain over the concrete parameters of what such engagement should (or should not) entail, focusing on how these processes contribute to the reconstitution of insider-outsider relations. Substantively zooming in on the issue of citizen participation in long-term care, this thesis is primarily guided by the following research question:

How do actors (re)define insider-outsider relations as they negotiate the emergence, parameters and significance of alleged-outsiders' participation within an organizational setting?

In order to answer this research question, I examine citizen participation as a phenomenon that is explicitly processual, i.e., I focus on the intricate processes that help explain how participatory pursuits unfold over time. Moreover, I highlight the dispersed nature of such participation, i.e., I explore whether local participatory efforts have an impact on (or, alternatively, whether they are affected by) other organizational processes that lie beyond their immediate context. Accounting for these processual and dispersed qualities helps me to more fully explore the political dimension of participatory efforts, i.e., to scrutinize how actors bargain over both who and what 'matters' within a given organizational setting.

Most notably, I explore how actors demarcate the notion of participation within three key areas: issues (What is participation about?), actors (Who participates?), and positions of authority (Does local participation affect the organizational status quo?). This leads to the following sub-questions:

(1.) How do actors demarcate which issues fall within the scope of participation (and which issues do not) as they negotiate the parameters of a participatory initiative?

(2.) How do actors demarcate who qualifies as a legitimate participant (and who does not) as they negotiate the parameters of a participatory initiative?

(3.) How do internal power dynamics (i.e., within an organization's notional boundaries) affect both a participatory initiative's front-line dynamics and the initiative's impact on established organizational practices?

Theoretically, these questions scrutinize how people bargain over the boundaries between issues, actors and positions of authority. Building on these inquiries, I specifically explore the theoretical implications of my research for how we conceptualize boundary work. In particular, I develop a conceptualization of boundary work that better accounts for its processual, dispersed and political dimensions, guided by the following question:

(4.) How do actors' disparate boundary enactments (a) interact over time, (b) interact across different locales and (c) interact within the established power relations between those actors whose respective positions are under scrutiny?

The first and second sub-question constitute the respective points of departure for Chapters 4 and 5. The third sub-question runs as a common theoretical thread across the different chapters of this thesis, although it is most explicitly addressed in Chapter 3. That chapter also addresses the fourth and last sub-question. In Chapter 7's concluding reflections and discussions, each sub-question will be addressed individually.

By answering these questions, my study generates new insights into citizen participation and, more broadly, into actors' attempts at (re)defining insider-outsider relations within an organizational setting. These insights hold both practical and theoretical significance. First, from a policy and practice perspective, this thesis may help policy makers, managers, professionals and citizens to grapple with the sometimes-paradoxical developments that emerge within participatory efforts. It provides them with a more realistic outlook on participation's potential opportunities, limitations and pitfalls. Particularly within our current historical timeframe in which citizen participation—and 'inclusive'

modes of organizing more generally—are 'in vogue' as a guiding principle for both public service reform, it is important to move beyond idealized notions of participation as a self-evident and undisputed imperative.

Secondly, and theoretically, my analysis of attempts to 'transcend organizational boundaries' explains why and how such attempts trigger intensified sequences of boundary work as actors negotiate the concrete parameters of alleged outsiders' involvement. My study thereby contributes to the development an approach that accounts for the processual, dispersed and political dynamics that shape both boundary-work processes and insider-outsider relations. The relevance of such an approach stretches beyond the current focus on citizen participation. When analyzing any pursuit of more 'inclusive' modes of organizing (e.g., in the context of network governance or within self-managing teams), my boundary-work approach helps to understand how such pursuits can, paradoxically, increase the symbolic significance of people's distinction-drawing. In practice, imperatives to 'flatten hierarchies' and to move across established divides are likely to trigger intensified dynamics of inclusion and exclusion, often running counter to the intentions or expectations of the advocates of such ambitions.

1.6 SOME NOTES ON THE BACKGROUND AND OUTLINE OF THIS THESIS

Four stand-alone articles, which resulted from my doctoral research at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam between 2012 and 2018, form the core of this thesis. Now Chapters 3 through 6 of this book, each of these articles has been written for publication in different academic journals. Together, these manuscripts scrutinize the notion of citizen participation from different perspectives and discuss the contributions of my study in the light of various theoretical and societal debates. Consequently, different parts of this thesis have been written with different audiences in mind—ranging from academic scholars of organizational theory, public administration, healthcare management and sociology to practitioners directly involved in participation pursuits. As a result, the different chapters in this thesis sometimes draw on different vocabularies or publishing styles. Chapters 3 through 6 have also been co-authored by my doctoral supervisors

and are written from a first-person-plural point of view. Moreover, as these chapters have been published separately as journal articles (with the exception of Chapter 5, which is still in review), I therefore refer to 'this paper' or 'this article' (instead of 'this chapter') within these sections. At the same time, by combining these manuscripts, the thesis provides an interdisciplinary insight into citizen participation. Moreover, the thesis' opening (1,2) and closing (7) chapters provide an overarching discussion of my study's background, its key findings and their main implications. The resulting account of citizen participation may be of interest to researchers, practitioners and other students from a wide variety of backgrounds including organization studies, health care management, sociology and public administration.

In what follows (Chapter 2), I will first present the context of my study, exploring the broader Dutch policy context as well as the more immediate setting of my case study. Moving forward, I then elaborate on the methodological and analytical choices that lie at the basis of my research approach. Chapters 3, 4 and 5 subsequently report on the outcomes of my case study analyses. They provide a theoretical account of boundary work as a means of studying insider-outsider relations (Chapter 3), an analysis of how actors within a single initiative negotiate competing notions of appropriate participation (Chapter 4), and an analysis of the inclusionary and exclusionary dynamics through which a particular set of citizen-participants gradually emerges and gains legitimacy within this initiative (Chapter 5). After these empirically grounded chapters, Chapter 6 implicitly builds on my empirical analyses by exploring the opportunities and limitations that accompany the ambition of using citizen participation as a central imperative in the broader pursuit of 'integrated care'. Finally, my concluding discussions in Chapter 7 reflect on the key findings from the previous chapters by exploring their theoretical and practical implications for how we understand and approach citizen engagement.

Having originally been stand-alone manuscripts, Chapters 3, 4 and 5 each include a separate discussion of my research approach. While these discussions emphasize those aspects most relevant to the chapters they concern, there will also be some overlap.

CHAPTER 2

THE STUDY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

My study of citizen participation zooms in on the developments surrounding an elderly care home in Carville (a pseudonym), a small town in a mostly-rural part of the Netherlands. Before explaining how I ended up investigating this particular case, and before elaborating on my ethnographic research approach, let me first say something more about how citizen participation has been featured within Dutch policy debates.

2.2 POLICY CONTEXT: CURBING PUBLIC SPENDING WHILE COUNTERING PATERNALISM?

Throughout the past decade, citizen participation has been a prominent issue within various Dutch policy discussions. Proclaiming the welfare state's gradual transformation into a 'participation society', the Dutch government has often emphasized both the desirability and inevitability of a more active role for citizens within the governance and delivery of care services (as described by, e.g., Putters, 2014). Responding to questions about what exactly this 'participation society' entailed, the Dutch prime minister explained to the Dutch parliament:

> We need to create space for the strengths of citizens and prevent the government from nipping their initiatives in the bud. This should make it possible to keep public-service quality up to par while making sure such services target the areas in which citizens' self-reliance falls short. At the same time, it should help us put a halt to the rising public expenses witnessed over recent years.
>
> (Ministerie van Algemene Zaken, 2014, p. 2; current author's translation)[1]

1 Original text in Dutch: 'We moeten ruimte bieden voor deze kracht [van burgers] en voorkomen

In order to untangle such endorsements for citizen participation, politicians and policy makers mainly refer to two broader developments that urge them to reconsider citizens' positions vis-à-vis the public services they (may) use. First, in the Netherlands, as in many other countries with advanced welfare states, there is a steady increase in the number of people using long-term care services. With an ageing population, higher life expectancy and better survival rates for people suffering from, for example, cancer and cardiovascular diseases, the number of people living with one or more chronic diseases is on the rise (Rijksinstituut voor Volksgezondheid en Milieu, 2018). This means that people use more care services and do so over a longer period of time—a development with considerable impact on public spending. Most professional long-term care services in the Netherlands, while provided by private, non-profit organizations, are publicly funded and regulated. The Dutch care system is known for its broadly defined eligibility criteria regarding an extensive range of publicly funded services (Kroneman et al., 2016). Public spending on long-term care has grown faster than any other type of care (e.g., urgent care) (OECD, 2017; Van der Horst, Van Erp, & De Jong, 2011). Against this background, considerable debate has ensued over 'appropriate' public and private roles and responsibilities within the Dutch long-term care sector (Putters, 2014; Raad voor de Volksgezondheid en Zorg, 2012; Sociaal-Economische Raad, 2012).

In addition to concerns about public expenses, a second often-cited development is that the current generation of older people is, on average, richer, better informed and more assertive than its predecessors (Smits, 2009; Tonkens, 2008; Van Houwelingen et al., 2014). Against this background, Dutch care services have often been considered too paternalistic and over-professionalized (Abma & Baur, 2014; Nies & Minkman, 2015). Such critiques assert that professionals and policy makers too often make decisions for care users, restricting individuals' abilities to live their lives the way they want. Challenging the image of elderly people as passive recipients of care, commentators have stressed care users' capacities for self-reliance. From this perspective, (potential) care recipients can and should be empowered to stay in control of their own lives, including the care

dat de overheid eigen initiatieven en mogelijkheden van mensen in de kiem smoort. Dit biedt ook kansen om de kwaliteit van voorzieningen op peil te houden en voorzieningen gericht in te zetten daar waar eigen kracht of netwerken tekortschieten. Hiermee kan tegelijkertijd de sterke groei van noodzakelijke overheidsmiddelen van de afgelopen jaren worden gestopt.'

services they use (Van De Bovenkamp & De Bont, 2016). For example, a broadly supported policy agenda has emerged that aims to ensure that elderly people, even those dependent on long-term care services, receive the support they need to live 'independently' as long as possible, i.e., outside an institutional care facility. Such policy programmes stress that 'a large part of the current generation of elderly people has a strong urge to stay in control while also having the (financial) capacity to do so' (Ministerie van Volksgezondheid Welzijn en Sport, 2018, p. 5; current author's translation). Moreover, and highlighting people's different perspectives on what constitutes 'good care' (Smits, 2009), scholars, policy makers and advocacy groups have challenged the intrinsic desirability of extensive national care-quality standards, instead advocating for more room for local variation and citizen participation (Raad voor Volksgezondheid en Samenleving, 2016). These various agendas and initiatives are underpinned by the notion that paternalism should be countered and that people should be enabled to represent their own perspectives, preferences and interests.

In response to concerns about both rising public expenses and this sense of paternalism, Dutch policy makers have devised a range of policy measures that, albeit in a variety of ways, echo the broader pursuit of a 'participation society'. A key example is the introduction (2007) and expansion (2015) of the Dutch Social Support Act ('Wet Maatschappelijke Ondersteuning'). In an attempt to 'recalibrate responsibilities between central and local government, between government and citizens, and between citizens themselves' (Verhoeven & Tonkens, 2013), the Social Support Act decentralized several care arrangements that had previously been organized on a national level, moving them instead to the municipal level. A key objective in this process was to support 'vulnerable' individuals' capacities to participate in society while at the same time enhancing citizens' abilities to influence local policies and care arrangements (Putters, Grit, Janssen, Schmidt, & Meurs, 2010). Furthermore, the Act reflected a pronounced shift towards more private responsibilities. By stimulating them to first address their care needs privately and/or by relying on their social networks, people would not automatically turn to the government or make use of public services (Kromhout, Kornalijnslijper, & De Klerk, 2018)—or at least that was the policy objective.

In addition to the Social Support Act, several other policy initiatives have been pursued in order to transform the relationship between citizens and the

(semi-)public institutions of the welfare state—sometimes emphasizing citizen or user empowerment (e.g., expanding user rights with regard to information exchange (Ministerie van Volksgezondheid Welzijn en Sport, 2017)), while at other times explicitly serving cost containment (e.g., increasing people's private financial contributions in cases of care home admission (Bakker & Ebenau, 2015)). In a variety of ways, these measures are the concrete manifestations of governmental attempts to recalibrate the positions and responsibilities of citizens within the governance, delivery and funding of care services.

Parallel to citizens' changing positions, professional care-provider organizations must also face the implications of such policy initiatives. They are expected to increasingly facilitate citizen participation and to place their relationship with citizens front and centre in how they organize their services (Boekholdt, 2007)—ambitions that are also resonated by actors in the professional field itself. For example, the national umbrella organization for long term care-provider organizations emphasized the need for a 'transformation in the role and attitude of professionals' (Actiz, 2012, p. 4), viewing the relationship between clients, their social networks and professionals as the cornerstone of professional care services. While these ambitions are in themselves broadly supported, translating them into concrete organizational practices often proves to be a challenging process. A former Dutch secretary of long-term care, for example, once accused care organizations of building a 'great wall' around their organization and blocking the involvement of informal caregivers. Allegedly, employees in care homes would consider residents' family members to be a 'nuisance', or only see them as instrumental 'servants' (Ministerie van Volksgezondheid Welzijn en Sport, 2009). Considering such accounts, perhaps it should not be a surprise that the pursuit of citizen participation, which challenges established ways of working within a highly professionalized field (Nies, 2014), has caused a considerable amount of friction.

In this study, we primarily zoom in on how such friction is dealt with when citizen participation is pursued in the context of institutional elderly care homes. In general, care-providing organizations have been facing a range of policy measures that effectively restrict people's access to care home facilities (Kromhout et al., 2018). Most notably, since 2013, access to publicly funded

residential care for people with relatively 'minor' care needs has been suspended[2]. Leading to a growing number of empty rooms and, as a result, impaired economic prospects, provider organizations across the country have feared being forced to close such facilities. An often-cited report published in 2013 estimated that 800 care homes would face closure as a result of this changing regulation (Castelijn, Van Kollenburg, & Te Meerman, 2013). In several of these cases, provider organizations started engaging local citizens—or they witnessed local citizens mobilizing themselves—to jointly explore the different scenarios available for sustaining or redeveloping such facilities. Raising a host of questions about the changing relationship between the professional and civic actors involved, these processes have provided a fruitful context for investigating the more-broadly relevant processes in which citizens and representatives of care-providing organizations negotiate the local manifestations of the so-called participation society.

2.3 CASE CONTEXT (PART I): ON CASE SELECTION, SITE ACCESS AND THEIR POLITICAL CONTINGENCIES

This thesis mainly draws on a single, two-and-a-half-year-long ethnographic case study. Selecting this empirical context was far from a linear process. Let me first expand on my original research plans and how these gradually evolved over time—a process that significantly affected my eventual empirical scope. Describing this process does not only provide a relevant background to my methodological choices, it also gives an initial insight in the political dynamics of citizen participation—dynamics that also affected my own research process.

Initially, I had set out to conduct multiple case studies of citizen participation around professional care homes, aimed at studying how provider organizations renegotiated their relationships with citizens in various areas of service governance and delivery. I was interested, for example, in how professional teams within nursing-home units engaged with family members and other volunteers when providing care. In addition, I also wanted to study local community members' involvement within the design and governance of services.

2 These measures only applied to people that had not yet been admitted to an institutional care setting.

In search of a suitable research site, I was supported by one of this project's supervisors who was simultaneously involved in the leadership of a national, publicly funded programme designed to support provider organizations around issues of organizational development and quality improvement ('InVoorZorg!'). Through this programme, I initially got in touch with two provider organizations. Operating in different regions of the Netherlands, these organizations collaborated within a programme referred to as 'Caring Communities'. In their action plans, the organizations stated:

> The notion of 'Caring Communities' acknowledges that clients' wellbeing is not only shaped by professional caregiving, but also highly influenced by their social contexts. Together, family members, social networks, volunteers and professional caregivers form a community around the client. Our main challenges are to keep this social context intact and to engage it within the provision of care.
>
> (Quote featured in both organizations' action plans; current author's translation)

Interestingly, while both organizations highlighted their involvement in 'Caring Communities', a programme whose raison d'être heavily emphasizes the pursuit of citizen participation, they each did so within a markedly different set of circumstances. First, one of the organizations operated within a largely rural context and ran several small town care homes. Its service region was characterized by, for Dutch standards, a relatively resource-poor demographic. Moreover, this area's population was steadily decreasing, leading to the closure of shops, schools and other facilities within the region's smaller towns. Second, in contrast, the other organization operated within an urban area that did not face these kinds of issues. While both organizations had to respond to policy changes that restricted the public criteria for care home admission, there was a considerable difference in the impact of these measures on their respective operations. For the rural-based provider, they implied that several of its small town care homes were at risk of being closed. This often meant that, from the local community's perspective, the last facility of its kind would disappear from town. In most of these cases, sustaining the regional care homes was only

considered possible if local citizens were to become increasingly involved with their operations. The urban-based organization, in contrast, did not face such drastic implications. For them, it was easier to shift their care homes' focus to a slightly different clientele, prevent high vacancy rates and avert financial problems. In sum, the urgency to pursue citizen participation was considered much greater within the rural-based organization.

The difference between these two research contexts also shaped my own attempts to gain access and perform my fieldwork. As more extensively described by Schwartz-Shea and Yanow (2012), accessing research sites often requires ongoing negotiations as opposed to a one-off approval to start collecting data. Throughout my research, these ongoing negotiations evolved differently within the two organizations. This did not have much to do with 'official' access to the research sites, which I was granted by the central management teams at both locations. Still, there was a considerable difference in my ability to access the research sites beyond this formal authorization. As my two primary contact persons were responsible for leading the 'Caring Communities' programme within their respective organizations, most employees, including potential gatekeepers, also associated my presence with that programme. Consequently, whether or not they considered my research to be important largely depended on their degree of interest in the 'Caring Communities' programme. This created markedly different dynamics within the two organizations.

Within the rural-based organization, the management team was, at least at onset of my research efforts, a strong proponent of the 'Caring Communities' programme. The head of the programme could rely on considerable support from the organization's CEO and was included as a member of the central management team. As a result, I was easily able to gain access to the various research sites. At one point, when a member of the organization's executive board invited me to meet with him, I anticipated needing to 'sell' or defend my research project. The opposite proved to be the case, as he asked me if there was anything else the management team could do to facilitate my research. Their support of the programme and my project allowed me to collect a rich set of data in a variety of settings, providing an important empirical basis for investigating how employees in positions across the organizational hierarchy dealt with competing orientations on what citizen participation should entail.

These dynamics were markedly different within the urban-based organization, where I started my data collection around the same time as in the rural case. In the early days of my fieldwork, a new director took office. Whereas her predecessor had been one of the driving forces behind the 'Caring Communities' programme, this new director seemed to prioritize different issues and initiatives. This had considerable bearing on my attempts to access relevant research sites. While I was able to attend, for example, training sessions with volunteers or meetings with family members and client representatives, I was unable to observe meetings at different levels of management. For the most part, I only heard about relevant meetings after they had already taken place. Given how considerably this limited the scope of my data collection, it was challenging to conduct a first-hand investigation of how 'internal' organizational dynamics set the stage for—and were affected by—pursuits of citizen participation.

Over time, and given the considerable differences in richness of the data I had collected at these two sites, the emphasis of my fieldwork shifted towards the rural-based organization. Progressively, my research turned into a 'single case' ethnographic study. This is reflected throughout the rest of this thesis. Chapters 3, 4 and 5 are entirely based on the data collected around one of the rural-based care homes. Because of the extensive opportunities for access, combined with this particular case's course of events (described in more detail in later chapters), the developments at this care home allowed me to conduct an in-depth analysis of several aspects of citizen participation—aspects of which the data from the urban case only began to scratch the surface. While I briefly touch on my observations at the urban-based organization in Chapter 6, the remainder of this thesis focuses on the pursuits of participation that were initiated by the rural-based organization around one of its small town care homes—a case I will further introduce in the next section.

In sum, I have elaborated on this process of case selection and site access for two reasons: because it gives context to the decisions I made that affected the design and methodology of my research and because it functions as a preface to my investigations of the boundary-work processes that I will analyze in the remainder of this thesis. The degree to which I was able to access the various research sites was contingent on the degree to which the people I studied considered citizen participation a worthwhile pursuit. Clearly, as a researcher, I

could not fully escape the processes of inclusion and exclusion that I had set out to study.

2.4 CASE CONTEXT (PART II): CAREORG AND THE PURSUIT OF PARTICIPATION IN CARVILLE

In what follows, I will narrow down my discussion to focus on the rural-based organization, from here on out referred to as CareOrg (a pseudonym). CareOrg is a large provider of long-term elderly care services. Like most long-term care providers in the Netherlands, it is a private not-for-profit organization that largely operates on public funding. At the onset of my research, CareOrg ran locations in 20 different towns in a predominantly rural part of the Netherlands. It employed around 2,800 people (together comprising about 1,400 full-time jobs) and served over 3,500 clients, mostly within residential care-home settings. It had an annual turnover of approximately 100 million euros. The organization had geographically divided its operations into four service regions, each with its own management team, while being directed and supported by the organization's headquarters. Initially, each care home had its own location manager but, early on in our research, these were replaced by 'heads of care' who had a somewhat narrower scope than their predecessors. At the onset of my research, the organization was reported to be in a healthy financial situation. Reaffirming its identity as a rural service provider who invests in local communities' wellbeing (as stated within official documents and by several employees), the 'Caring Communities' programme was presented as a key strategic imperative to sustain the relevance of the organization's operations.

In pursuit of the 'Caring Communities' ideals, one specific CareOrg location was considered to be a key site in which its efforts were put to the test: a care home in Carville (also a pseudonym), a small rural town with under a thousand inhabitants. Traditionally, this care home mainly served those with relatively 'mild' care needs—i.e., people who, under the new policy regime, ceased to be eligible for publicly funded care-home admission. This dynamic, which resulted in increasing vacancy rates and, consequently, a progressively precarious financial situation, posed a direct threat to the continuity of the facility. Although CareOrg and their partner organizations were planning to develop smaller-scale facilities

in town (facilities that would allow this particular target group to privately rent a home at affordable rates and receive publicly funded home care), it would take at least five years before they could be realized. A key question, then, was whether it would be feasible to keep the 'old' home up and running until in the meantime. If the facilities were to close, the people still living there would be forced to move to a different care home in a different town.

Both the CareOrg leadership and Carville inhabitants stated their interest in, and commitment to, exploring whether such a scenario could be prevented. With other locations posed to soon face a similar dynamic, the situation in Carville was seen as an important pilot case for the organization. Its developments were closely monitored by CareOrg's central management team and supported by several advisory staff members from the organization's headquarters. As the continuation of fully professionalized services was not seen as a feasible option, both CareOrg employees and local citizens seemed urgent to recalibrate their relationships and mutual involvement. As such, the developments in Carville provided fertile ground for investigating the processes in which abstract ambitions around citizen participation were translated into concrete participatory practices.

Before moving on to my methodological approach, a particular historical event seems worth mentioning in relation to the case. For over a century, the town of Carville was home to a large mental-health care institution. This facility was a major employer in the region. While these facilities had been closed in the early 1990s, Carville inhabitants still heatedly referred to this event, lamenting how 'they' had decided to take this facility away from them. Many feared a similar fate for the care home and this history was seen as the fuel behind the townspeople's suspicion of 'big institutions'. Indeed, references to this particular event frequently surfaced when citizens expressed or explained their suspicions of CareOrg's motives within the processes I was investigating. The organization, with its headquarters located 50 kilometres outside of town, had only taken over operation of the care home several years earlier as the result of a merger. As such, people in town tended to see CareOrg as an 'external' party.

2.5 METHODOLOGY: AN ETHNOGRAPHIC APPROACH

In this study, I take an ethnographic approach to investigating how CareOrg

employees and Carville citizens negotiated, contested, transgressed and defended boundaries as they demarcated the parameters of citizen participation. Ethnography makes it possible to study 'how social order is organized from within' (Boden, 1994 in Tsoukas & Chia, 2002, p. 578) and is therefore well-suited to capture how participatory practices emerge and are made sense of by the actors directly involved in them. Ethnography has the potential to generate critical insights into organizational phenomena, revealing otherwise 'hidden social realities' and capturing the 'potential multiplicity of voices and interpretations that create and recreate the stages and stories of organizational life' (Ybema, Yanow, Wels, & Kamsteeg, 2009, p. 7,8). Consequently, an ethnographic approach has allowed me to move beyond functionalist or managerialist accounts of boundary-work processes and, accordingly, of citizen participation. In the following sections, I will discuss the methodological strategies and decisions that have shaped this particular ethnographic study.

2.5.1 The rhythm of ethnography and interpretive research

Before discussing the specifics of the fieldwork conducted for this study, let me first position my research approach within the broader interpretive research tradition. As coined by Schwartz-Shea and Yanow, interpretive approaches:

> [R]est on a belief in the existence of (potentially) multiple, intersubjectively constructed "truths" about social, political, cultural, and other human events; and on the belief that these understandings can only be accessed, or co-generated, through interactions between researcher and researched as they seek to interpret those events and make those interpretations legible to each other.
>
> (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012, p. 4)

In order to clarify how this tradition has influenced my current methodological approach, it may be helpful to compare it to what is often considered interpretivism's antipode within the social sciences: positivism. Ideal-typically, positivist researchers try to generate objective accounts of the social world, i.e., accounts that are completely free from bias and preconception, making it possible to build theories that hold their validity across research contexts. Interpretivism,

in contrast, is not so much interested in generating a single, authoritative account of social phenomena, but rather in trying to understand such phenomena by studying 'the self-understanding of those engaged in creating or performing them' (Fay, 1996, p. 113). Comprehending the social world in such different ways, researchers in these respective traditions apply different strategies in order to build their knowledge claims.

A key point of divergence lies in how researchers deal with the possibility of different interpretations of social phenomena. Positivist research considers such differences problematic. By 'limiting the flexibility of the research design and the flexibility and judgement of researchers' (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012, p. 95), studies in this tradition try to control for different interpretations, effectively detaching a phenomenon's meaning from its observer and from the specific context in which observations take place. A positivist researcher relies on carefully (pre-)operationalized research constructs to support the validity of its knowledge claims. Interpretive research, in contrast, 'sees different interpretations as inevitable' (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012, p. 95) and renders it both impossible and undesirable to fully control for them. Instead of 'fixing' the meaning of concepts at the front end of the research process, an interpretative researcher primarily tries to understand how concepts are used or given meaning in the field, i.e., as they 'are shaped by their situational use and by the lived experience of those [...] in the study setting' (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012, p. 18).

These different orientations to the issue of interpretation have considerable implications for the 'rhythm' of research within these two traditions. Positivist approaches 'typically begin by stipulating definitions of the concepts that researchers want to study ahead of time' (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012, p. 17) before operationalizing them into measurable variables that subsequently allow researchers to test hypothesized relationships. In this process, there tends to be a clear division between (a) the initial 'desk phase' in which research questions and designs are formulated, (b) the subsequent phase of data collection and (c) the analysis of the collected data. Within interpretative research projects, this temporal division of activities is much less pronounced. Interpretive researchers continuously move back and forth between (re)formulating their approach, data collection and data analysis. This makes the development of a research design

an ongoing, circular exercise: initial research questions and strategies may be adapted based on emerging insights from the field, as these insights may prompt new questions that 'could not have been posed without having stumbled on the unexpected answer to the initial question' (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012, p. 55). Against this background, a defining characteristic of an interpretive and, particularly, ethnographic approach is researchers' ability to flexibly adjust their research activities on the basis of their provisional sense-making in the field, allowing them to generate 'a fuller, more grounded, practice-based understanding' (Ybema et al., 2009, p. 2) of the phenomena that are being studied.

Throughout this study, my research focus did indeed gradually develop over the course of my time in the field. In hindsight, it might be fair to say that I entered the field with somewhat naïve expectations of the citizen participation pursuits I was about to study. During initial talks at CareOrg, the organization that hosted my fieldwork, I witnessed an ambitious director who was a strong advocate of citizen participation. His organization had stated clear policy ambitions regarding the pursuit of such participation, though he admitted to continuing to struggle to identify appropriate 'governance mechanisms' to coordinate the organization's efforts with local citizens' involvement. As a result, I initially entered the field thinking that my empirical investigations would mainly revolve around how such 'governance mechanisms' would be gradually shaped to support the alignment of citizens' and employees' efforts. My main empirical focus, I expected, would be on the 'front-line' interactions of citizens and employees as they negotiated their mutual roles and responsibilities, and on how these would be coordinated. Having already chosen the path of citizen participation, the actors involved—I surmised—would now have to look for ways to make it work.

It was only after starting my initial observations, however, that I realized how much citizen participation was both a contentious and ambiguous objective among CareOrg employees. By observing employees as they prepared for their meetings with locals citizens, I became aware that the nature of citizen participation, and whether or not it should be pursued at all, was far from self-evident. First, the parameters of citizen participation were subject to fervent political struggle among different employees who were rooted in competing interests and different interpretations of a desirable strategic course for their organization. Regularly, one employee's enthusiastic comments about the

participatory process would raise an eyebrow with employees sitting on the other side of the table. While some hailed the process in Carville as an example of how local service governance ought to be done, others thought that the organization was acting 'crazy'. Second, even advocates of participation seemed to struggle with not only its exact meaning, but also its implications for their own work as a professional provider organization. I witnessed employees who passionately advocated for citizen participation among their colleagues only to heavily curtail citizens' opportunities to do so later. These intricacies were further aggravated by local citizens who also held different perspectives on what constituted a desirable interpretation of citizen participation. Consequently, my research focus progressively shifted away from investigating how actors tried to optimize the alignment of citizens and employees towards studying how actors bargained over the elusive and contentious question of what citizen participation meant in the first place. Eventually, I ended up dedicating a substantial part of my research to studying internal organizational politics and how these constituted a background against which citizen participation was pursued.

Such flexibility and potential focus on emergence within interpretive studies requires considerable reflexivity on the part of the researcher: how do the researchers' own backgrounds and positions affect the insights that are generated in a study? In the absence of fixed, minutely predefined questions and constructs, interpretive researchers, and ethnographers in particular, constitute their own foremost research instrument. During the research process, but also when reporting on its outcomes, this requires them to be transparent about their personal characteristics, their position in the field and their own potential prejudices or biases. These are issues that cannot be fully grasped (let alone controlled for) at the onset of a research project. It is only during an active study that a researcher's identities, positions and relationships within the field are negotiated in real time (Ybema et al., 2009). In other words, the researcher can never be seen as completely separate from the field (s)he is studying or the insights that are generated.

2.5.2 Fieldwork

Ethnography relies on a researcher's prolonged presence within a field of study, engaging in 'up-close' observations of events—both informal conversations

and formal interviews with these events' participants—and the close reading of relevant documentary sources (Ybema et al., 2009). Traditionally, ethnography has been associated with fieldwork conducted in a single, geographically bound site or community. Increasingly, however, scholars have highlighted the merits of multi-sited fieldwork 'in which the researcher moves among linked sites, following actors, concepts, issues, objects or other entities central to the research question' (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012, p. 66). By studying phenomena as they unfolded over time and across multiple research sites, this doctoral thesis also relies on such multi-sited fieldwork—allowing me to effectively combine 'an orientation towards subjective experience and individual agency in everyday life with sensitivity to the broader social settings and historical and institutional dynamics in which these emerge or are embedded' (Ybema et al., 2009, p. 7; also see Schwartz-Shea and Yanow, 2012). In other words, I investigated the situated micro-events through which citizen participation was constituted, as well as these events' broader contextual contingencies.

In particular, this study builds on two-and-a-half years of ethnographic fieldwork, conducted between June 2013 and December 2015, designed to study the dynamics of citizen participation around the care home in Carville. Meant to observe the local 'front-line' interactions between citizens and employees while also taking care to capture the more 'distant' events that affected this local situation, my fieldwork was primarily organized around both 'external' meetings with CareOrg employees, local citizens and other local stakeholders, and 'internal' meetings with CareOrg employees only. Throughout these various meetings, I paid particular attention to what constituted participants' beliefs regarding a 'legitimate' scope for local citizen involvement and to how they dealt with situations in which different, at-times-contradictory perspectives collided. To observe how meetings were prepared and evaluated, but also to gain insight into everyday work routines beyond such relatively formal settings, my observations were always combined with extensive periods of 'hanging out'. By following actors as they discussed citizen participation within different organizational settings and as they positioned themselves in relation to different organizational communities, I was able to grasp how they enacted boundaries within different locations and in the presence of different audiences. By following the uncertain course of events surrounding the care home, I was able to capture the 'short-lived

factors and changes' (Van de Ven, 2007, p. 208) that might have been filtered out if methodological and analytical choices had been fixed before immersion in the field (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012).

As a main focus during my fieldwork, I observed 45 meeting, i.e., scheduled and at least somewhat formalized gatherings of people who were directly or indirectly involved with the trajectory in Carville. Almost all meetings (at least in part) directly concerned the situation of the local care home, although I also attended a few meetings just to gain more insight into the broader context in which participants operated (e.g., I observed a meeting of the organization's central logistics department even though the Carville case was not a topic of discussion). In total, I observed 15 strictly internal CareOrg meetings while 30 meetings also included local citizens and/or other actors involved with the care home. On average, meetings lasted approximately 1 hour and 15 minutes. All but seven meetings took place in an office or meeting room in the care home itself while the rest were held at CareOrg's head office (approx. 50 km from Carville), a neighbouring care home, the office of a partner organization or at one of two 'civic' venues in town. Wherever possible, travel between sites was done in the company of key participants, providing valuable opportunities to grasp their reflections in informal exchanges. Most meetings were audio-recorded (resulting in almost 38 hours of tape) and largely transcribed, particularly focusing on discussions that (either directly or indirectly) revolved around the respective positions and relationships among and between CareOrg employees and local citizens. During most meetings, my own role as a researcher was that of a mostly passive observer, although in the latter part of my fieldwork, and after having already attended meetings over a fairly long stretch of time, participants would sporadically ask for my input within their discussions. In such instances, I took care to stay 'neutral' wherever possible and I was purposively reluctant to share my personal perspective and position on issues that were debated in the meetings. (In the next section I will discuss my positioning within the field in more detail, including its challenges and discomforts.)

Supplementing this core corpus of observational data, I also engaged in a myriad of both informal and more formalized conversations throughout the 38 days I spent in the field. These conversations with participants, i.e., both citizens and employees who were either directly or indirectly involved with the

trajectory in Carville, mostly had an informal and spontaneous character. They enabled me to capture people's accounts of their experiences outside of a formal interview setting, encouraging them to speak relatively freely about the process of citizen participation and to reflect on their own as well as on other participants' involvement in it. These conversations provided me with a more grounded understanding of participants' motivations for their actions throughout the events that I observed, as well as of their own interpretations of these events. The conversations that took place immediately after a meeting were particularly eye opening as they enabled me to speak to participants as they were still processing their emotions; sharing their excitement, approval, frustrations, confusion or disappointment in the interactions that had just transpired. Furthermore, they provided me with the opportunity to ask for clarification if I did not understand the background, motivation or implications of the (inter)actions that I had just witnessed.

While I captured most of these conversations by taking field notes soon after they had taken place, 16 conversations and interviews were audio-recorded (resulting in over nine hours of recording) and transcribed. As 'one cannot count on encountering all key participants by hanging out at the water-cooler, coffee or copy machine, or "loo"' (Yanow, 2009, p. 194), I arranged more formalized interviews with participants with whom I was less likely to 'naturally' strike up a conversation, including people in central management positions and other participants who spent relatively little time in Carville. These interviews enabled me to include the accounts of actors who were simultaneously relevant but also (more or less) 'distant' to the developments around the care home. Such interviews also helped me gain insight into the developments that took place in social settings I was unable to observe directly. Moreover, I arranged additional interviews with a number key participants who were more closely involved in the process, allowing me to capture what they saw as legitimate positions for the different actors involved in the care home in more depth and to reflect on the situations in which these positions were (not) being enacted. (See Table 2.1 for an overview of which participants were interviewed.) Each interview was individually prepared using a topic list attuned to the particular interviewee and the particular events and processes he or she might elaborate on. Interviews generally lasted between 45 minutes and an hour.

In addition to coverage by local and regional media, I also tracked internal and external publications by CareOrg throughout the entire period of my fieldwork. I was subscribed to a local (Carville-only) weekly that regularly printed articles about the care home's situation, written either by local citizens or by CareOrg employees. Articles about CareOrg and/or the trajectory in Carville that would appear in regional newspapers were circulated within the organization and forwarded to me. Such publications helped me understand the various ways CareOrg was portrayed within local and regional debates while also allowing me to capture the public image that the organization itself tried to convey. Internal CareOrg publications, targeted at the organization's employees, helped me understand not only how the organization's leadership tried to present and frame CareOrg's situation, but also how they conveyed the strategic course that had been set out.

By combining these various data sources, I was able to juxtapose my real-time observations of participants' in-situ (inter)actions and people's more distant reflections and accounts of these same events. Doing so allowed me to capture the ambiguities and contradictions that would have otherwise remained concealed if my empirical focus had been confined to participants' post-hoc justifications for their actions. Throughout my fieldwork and analysis, I regularly came across discrepancies between, on the one hand, the official CareOrg policy discourse on promoting citizen participation and the image employees tried to convey to the outside world and, on the other hand, the more contentious dynamics between actors as they bargained over the meaning and implications of citizen participation. As the rest of this thesis will demonstrate, understanding such competing accounts of a single process—including the ways in which such discrepancies were dealt with—was essential for understanding the direction in which the pursuit of citizen participation unfolded.

During the latter part of my fieldwork, I organized two reflection sessions with several CareOrg managers and advisory staff in various hierarchical positions. Within these two sessions, I was able to share my observations, in order to check whether I 'got it right' from their perspectives, and, as complete agreement among actors was improbable, to better understand the interpretive discrepancies that these sessions revealed (Buchanan & Dawson, 2007; Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012). In general, the sessions confirmed the findings of my observations and

conversations throughout the Carville trajectory. The tension between 'democratic' aspirations for participation and the more 'instrumental' considerations that often guided employees (a tension that constituted a theme in my findings) consistently re-emerged within these sessions. While preparing for one of these sessions, I devised a fairly straightforward timeline of the developments in Carville, which I wanted to quickly discuss before moving on to my provisional analysis of these developments. During the session, however, I never got to this latter part of my presentation due to the extensive debate among participants that ensued after I merely listed the events that had transpired in Carville—debate that again highlighted participants' divergent perspectives on and responses to the tension between 'democratic' and 'instrumental' considerations. As a result, I decided to use the audio-recordings of these reflection sessions as additional data to supplement my direct observations of the process in and around Carville. In addition to these two reflection sessions with CareOrg managers and advisory staff, I informally held similar discussions with other employees and local citizens during my last months in the field, using these to further refine my analysis.

Table 2.1 provides an overview of the data collected for this case study.

2.5.3 On researcher positionality: being and relating in the field

In ethnographic studies, reflexivity is key: how do a researcher's personal characteristics and location in the field affect the research project's outcomes (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012; Ybema et al., 2009)? In this section I will reflect on how, in my experience, participants perceived my presence as a researcher, how I related to these participants and how developments within my empirical field affected my position.

Let me start with how I experienced my relation to the local citizens I came across during my fieldwork. Generally speaking, I felt like an outsider in Carville. Being a rural town with less than a thousand inhabitants, people in town tended to know each other fairly well, often having lived there for at least a substantial part of their lives. Carville residents were allegedly known for their skeptical attitude towards the government, 'the big city' and the Randstad (the mostly urban, western part of the Netherlands). This scepticism was regularly confirmed during my fieldwork, e.g., as people often made critical remarks about 'The Hague' (i.e., where the Dutch national government resides) or regularly

TABLE 2.1 Overview of empirical material

DATA SOURCES	RESULTING DATA
45 meetings observed (mostly audio-recorded) 15 internal CareOrg meetings: • 13 with the Carville project team • 1 with the logistics department • 1 policy staff member's 'good-bye party' 30 meetings with local citizens: • 4 open-to-all public meetings • 18 citizen/employee working-group meetings • 1 with civil-society organizations • 3 with both citizens and professional third parties • 4 with residents' family and/or volunteers	38 hours of audio recording (selectively transcribed); field notes*
16 audio-recorded interviews and conversations 13 individual interviews and 3 group interviews (2-4 people): • 4 interviews with 3 different citizens • 12 interviews with 9 different employees, including: o 1 social worker (1 interview) o 3 policy advisors (8 interviews) o 3 local and regional managers (3 interviews) o 2 central-management team members (4 interviews)	9 hours of audio recording (fully transcribed); field notes*
38 days on site (ranging from 4-hour visits to overnight stays) • Numerous informal conversations, mainly before and after meetings • Extensive 'hanging out' before and after meetings, observing employees' everyday work	Extensive field notes*
2 audio-recorded reflection sessions with CareOrg employees • 1 with 2 members of the central management team • 1 with 4 employees in both leadership and advisory roles, from central, regional and local offices.	Almost 3 hours of audio recording (selectively transcribed)*

* Transcripts and notes together comprised a total of 154,338 words

mentioned feeling 'left out' by the larger municipality to which Carville belongs. Throughout my fieldwork I not only lived and worked in Amsterdam but, being in my late twenties, I was also considerably younger than the citizens engaged in the care home's developments. Especially upon my first visits to Carville, I indeed felt like an outsider. Initially, many local citizens did not seem eager to open up in conversation, whether with me or during the initial meetings with CareOrg employees.

While I remained somewhat of an outsider throughout my fieldwork (I spent much more time out of the field rather than in it), this experience did change over time. Having grown up in a fairly small town in a (different) rural area of the Netherlands myself, I more or less unwittingly found myself stressing my rural roots when introducing myself to the residents of Carville—something I would rarely do otherwise. On a few occasions, when it made sense to spend more than one day in a row in town, I spent the night in a vacant room in the care home (I lived more than two hundred kilometres away, initially lacking a driver's licence). These prolonged stays provided me with opportunities to walk around town and to learn about the town's recent history; about the large mental health institution, for example, which had already closed over 25 years ago but still seemed to considerably impact the inhabitants' collective consciousness; or about the years-long debate regarding what would happen to the large piece of land that this institution had left behind. While such issues may seem trivial to my research, they formed an important context to understanding citizens' perspectives on the current situation surrounding the care home. Moreover, and more practically, these experiences helped me make small talk and build rapport with local townspeople. By regularly returning to Carville over what eventually turned out to be a two-and-a-half-year period, I was able to establish a more positive relationship with several people in town who were involved with the care home's developments. For example, people started inviting me over for dinner and offering to let me use their bicycles when in town. Gradually, they also started being more open in conversation with me, sometimes sharing their experiences, motivations or rationales—under the condition that I would not share these with others in the trajectory. Because of my status as an outsider, local citizens also seemed to consider it harmless to be relatively frank with me. Moreover, my longer stays in town allowed me to strike up conversations with people I randomly

encountered, enabling me to get a feel for how big of an issue the situation around the care home was to the people in town. Increasingly, these experiences made me relate to the locals' fear of the care home being closed—seeing yet another public facility move away from town.

Still, it was a select number of CareOrg employees with whom I built the closest ties during my time in the field. The entry point for my research at CareOrg, as described earlier, was a shared interest in learning about the pursuit of citizen participation. Accordingly, the main advocates of citizen participation within the organization, including CareOrg's director, were the ones most supportive of my presence as a researcher. At the study's onset, as I tried to gain an initial understanding of the organization's strategies and experiences within their pursuit of citizen participation, these employees functioned as my key informants. As the trajectory progressed, I came to sympathize with these people's ambitions to let citizens participate in the decision-making processes that affected them. It was relatively easy to personally relate to their agendas, even though these were never entirely unambiguous. As several of these people occupied powerful positions within the organization, our shared interest in citizen participation granted me considerable advantages in terms of access: it opened doors to the potential research sites I expected to be relevant to my inquiries.

On the flip side, as I found myself establishing a good relationship with these advocates of citizen participation, I had to take particular care not to skew my personal identification or my exposure in the field towards these advocates' actions, accounts and agendas. The 'easy access' that followed from their interest in my research also made me conscious of what I might not be seeing when only relying on them as gatekeepers. In other words, I had to deliberately seek exposure to sites where support for participation was less self-evident, sites where I might encounter alternative accounts of participation pursuits. For example, I made sure to expose myself to the dynamics and developments within CareOrg's logistical department; a department that participation advocates sometimes scolded for 'operating on an island' and frustrating the organization's participatory ambitions. It was here that I was better able to grasp an understanding of the competing considerations facing various employees—considerations that were potentially at odds with the 'democratizing' imperative of participation. Such exposure was crucial to my research and to my eventual findings, i.e., by making it possible to

move beyond the notion of citizen participation as a panacea for local care service governance.

Having said that, my position in the field sometimes did limit my empirical scope, especially during later parts of my fieldwork. Initially, when my main focus was on the local process in Carville, I had no difficulties 'accessing' the organization's regional office or central headquarters. In hindsight, however, I did not get an entirely satisfying view of the rationales and strategies applied by what eventually turned out to be an important group of actors: the organization's medical staff. While the medical staff was not directly involved in the participatory trajectory in Carville, their actions triggered a leadership crisis and the subsequent resignation of CareOrg's director. These events substantially affected both the local trajectory and my own position as a researcher. Towards the end of my fieldwork, the developments within the organization's leadership frustrated my former abilities to easily access research sites. As various participation advocates had resigned from their offices, the perceived significance of my research to the organization's central management team was heavily compromised. I now experienced the act of gaining access to a research site as 'a continually negotiated process [that] reflects localized socially embedded conditions and practices' (Bondy, 2012, p. 578)—whereby such 'localized conditions' had not changed in my favour. As stated earlier, my research endeavours were not immune to the (political) processes I was studying.

2.6 DATA ANALYSIS

As is typically the case with qualitative and, particularly, ethnographic studies, it is hard to make a sharp distinction between the various phases of my fieldwork and analysis (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012; Ybema et al., 2009). My initial attempts to make sense of the 'complex, messy, [and] eclectic' data (Langley & Abdallah, 2011, p. 202) I gathered while still moving in and out of the field informed my later data collection. Throughout my research process I considered theory and data 'in tandem', allowing these to mutually inform one another (Ybema, 2010). In fact, this iterative process of data collection and analysis helped me develop multiple analytical foci, which then helped me make sense of my data. For more details about these individual foci, read on to Chapters 3, 4 and 5 where I elaborate,

respectively, on how I (1) theoretically scrutinize the dynamics of boundary work, (2) make sense of how organizational actors deal with competing notions of what citizen participation should entail and (3) analyze how a generic category of 'citizens' is translated into a concrete set of 'participants'. For now, let me make some general remarks on how I approached these analyses.

In order to understand the relationship between people's micro-interactions and the broader developments that unfolded over the course of my two-and-a-half years in the field I analytically zoomed in and out of my data, effectively 'conceptualizing and studying "macro" phenomena as the result of the association between local instances of ordering' (Nicolini, 2009, p. 1395). First, and while my fieldwork was still ongoing, I composed a timeline of events in order to obtain an overview of the macro-dynamics surrounding the participatory efforts within my case setting (e.g., who was involved on which platform, what was the scope of each platform's agenda, how did the different platforms relate to one another and to those in decision-making positions, etc.). Second, and also throughout my fieldwork, I imported my transcripts, field notes and the documents I had collected into a computer program for qualitative data analysis (MaxQDA) in order to conduct a more fine-grained analysis of my data. This allowed me to capture how employees' and citizens' shifting positions and relations were 'constituted in the mundane "stuff" of everyday interactions' (Baxter & Montgomery, 1996, p. 27). By linking my analyses of such micro-interactions across various research sites—e.g., by comparing employees' actions as observed within (1) 'cross-boundary' platforms that engaged citizens versus (2) 'internal' organizational spaces—I followed Van Hulst and colleagues' (2017) plea for ethnographically following how people, things and issues 'travel' across different localities. This enabled me to map and scrutinize the connections and disconnections between people's boundary enactments 'over time and across locales, levels and domains' (van Hulst et al., 2017, p. 233).

As I made sense of my data, my eventual analytical framework gradually emerged. Initially, I structured my data by using codes that closely reflected the empirical material (e.g., 'broadening local group agenda', 'pleading for more concrete deadlines' or 'challenging CareOrg's motives'). Next, I analyzed these empirical codes as instances of boundary work. I identified acts of opening and closing boundaries in relation to (distinctions between) actors, issues

and positions of authority, subsequently analyzing how the dynamics of such boundary work changed over the course of my fieldwork. In doing so, I moved back and forth between my data and the literature to identify major themes and analytical angles through which my study could contribute to extant theorizing on both organizational boundaries and citizen participation. Gradually, a number of key themes emerged that eventually came to constitute the next three chapters of this doctoral thesis. To start, instead of finding that citizens and employees bargained over a fairly clear-cut boundary that demarcated actors' respective mandates and responsibilities, I encountered a myriad of much more ambiguous and contentious boundary enactments that ensued as people negotiated the meaning and implications of citizen participation. Untangling the dynamics of such boundary enactments, Chapter 3 scrutinizes the processual, dispersed and political dimensions of boundary work in more detail—all being dimensions that I found insufficiently explored within extant boundary work literature. This analysis provided the theoretical basis for my further analyses of different aspects of citizen participation. By exploring how people enacted contradictory boundaries as they demarcated the concrete parameters of citizen participation, I was then able to identify a qualitative difference in the boundaries that different actors proposed to redraw. In Chapter 4, I elaborate on how these differences played out as actors negotiated what citizen participation was really about, i.e., whether citizens should be seen as operational volunteers or, alternatively, as strategic partners. At the same time, I encountered actors who bargained over boundaries in a different area: who exactly did the 'citizen' in citizen participation refer to? While this question has been addressed in extant literature, my analysis—further elaborated on in Chapter 5—reveals dynamics that had yet to be sufficiently covered either within critical studies of citizen co-optation or within functionalist studies that treat the selection of citizens as a design choice. Within Chapters 3, 4 and 5, I also explain my respective analytical processes and strategies in more detail. In Chapter 6, in which I explore the conceptual implications of citizen participation for the field of integrated care, I draw on my analyses as elaborated in these earlier chapters.

Cutting across these different chapters, my findings demonstrate the importance of considering how 'micro' events are mediated by the 'macro' developments that originate elsewhere. Within the context of this study, this

means that, on the one hand, the local dynamics of citizen and employee interactions were significantly affected by the more distant processes of internal organizational politics. On the other hand, my analyses also show how such organizational politics also shaped whether or not these local interactions actually had any strategic bearing beyond the local contexts in which they were situated. This doctoral thesis provides an account of citizen participation that goes beyond its local manifestation in front-line interactions between citizens and employees. It demonstrates citizen participation to be highly contentious issue within the organizations pursuing it. It touches upon more fundamental (and often contentious) questions about an organizations strategic course, while having the potential to affect established (power) relations between different employees within different departments and in different hierarchical positions. In other words, my analyses show that organizational pursuits aimed at external alignment with participating citizens can only be explained in conjunction with an awareness that such participation is also a fervently debated *internal* issue.

CHAPTER 3

PARTICIPATION AS BOUNDARY WORK

Engaged yet excluded:
The processual, dispersed
and political dynamics
of boundary work

Abstract – What happens when people try to 'transcend' organizational boundaries and engage with so-called outsiders? Current boundary-work literature does not fully account for the processual, dispersed, and political dynamics triggered by such efforts. To address this shortcoming, this paper builds on an ethnographic study of a professional care provider's attempts to engage local citizens within one of its care homes. We analyze how actors negotiate the parameters of outsider engagement—i.e., how they interactively (re-)erect and (re-)efface boundaries between actors (Who is engaged?), issues (What is their engagement about?), and positions of authority (Does local engagement affect central decision-making?). We contribute to extant theorizing by, first, explicitly scrutinizing boundary work's temporal and spatial dynamics. Testifying to the importance of analyzing temporal sequences, we show how attempts at transcending boundaries intensified boundary work on multiple organizational platforms. Paradoxically, inclusionary efforts evoked exclusionary effects (and vice versa) as actors came to contest and, eventually, redefine 'appropriate' insider-outsider relations. Second, our analysis highlights how the political effectiveness of an inclusive and non-hierarchical approach still, ironically, depends on ongoing hierarchical support and managerial enforcement. Third, our paper makes a case for the adoption of long-term, multi-sited methodologies when studying the everyday dynamics of boundary-work processes.

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3.1 INTRODUCTION

In popular organization and management literature, the image of the boundaryless organization has popularized the notion of actors, ideas, and products flowing freely across contemporary organizations' notional boundaries. Likewise, academic literature tends to treat organizational boundaries as fluid and porous (Hirschhorn & Gilmore, 1992; Kellogg et al., 2006). While this premise forms a welcome rebuttal to static conceptions of boundaries as 'something stable "between" individuals and groups, organizations and environments' (Heracleous, 2004, p. 101; Ellis & Ybema, 2010; Hernes, 2004; Wright, 2009), its emphasis on fluidity, permeability, or 'boundarylessness' risks creating an equally skewed counter-image in which boundaries are seen as increasingly insignificant to organizing (Paulsen & Hernes, 2003). In order to reconcile such 'solid' and 'liquid' boundary conceptions, scholars have demonstrated that organizational boundaries are potentially both divisive and permeable, rigid and fluid. Depending on their particular context and situational relevance (Sturdy, Handley, et al., 2009), boundaries may be strategically enacted to function as bridges or as barriers. By acknowledging that they are a negotiated but nonetheless 'essential medium through which people acquire status and monopolize resources' (Lamont & Molnár, 2002, p. 169), a growing amount of research highlights the political character of boundaries within organizational processes (e.g., Alvesson et al., 2009; Bucher, Chreim, Langley, & Reay, 2016; Wright, 2009).

While these accounts do conceptual justice to the recursive relationship between boundaries and the organizational practices from which they emerge (Zietsma & Lawrence, 2010), we believe that extant literature has underresearched the processual, dispersed and political dynamics of boundary-work processes and undertheorized the temporally interlocked sequences of ongoing, multi-sited boundary negotiations. Current boundary studies have, for example, examined

the contested legitimacy of organizational actors and practices within a particular field (e.g., Zietsma & Lawrence, 2010), the various strategies by which actors defend or challenge their positions (e.g., Bucher et al., 2016), and the different kinds of boundaries (e.g., physical, social, and mental) they uphold or break down, each of which holds the potential to structure social relationships in various ways (Hernes, 2004). Although these studies illustrate that recent literature has indeed moved beyond one-dimensional and overly simplistic boundary conceptions, they often continue to reify boundaries, i.e., they downplay the sequential and interconnected character of disparate, often-contested boundary enactments—an awareness of which, we contend, is crucial to fully understanding boundary-work processes. For instance, some scholars have explored how boundaries 'operate' (Vakkayil, 2012, p. 216) or scrutinized the 'state' of boundaries—e.g., by observing the '[s]trong boundaries around a field' (Zietsma & Lawrence, 2010, p. 190) and how these may remain 'intact' or become 'compromised' (p. 209). Such accounts, even when empirically focused on the processes in which boundaries are negotiated, remain at risk of theoretically treating boundaries as 'separated and disconnected from the process[es] that created them' (Bakken & Hernes, 2006, p. 1601). Moreover, by empirically concentrating on boundaries as being relatively singular demarcations of a field, jurisdiction, or work unit, scholars often end up exclusively focusing on boundary spanners and their cross-boundary activities (e.g., Ellis & Ybema, 2010; Kellogg et al., 2006). Inadvertently, such vernacular may insufficiently account for boundaries' plural nature, the processual and potentially paradoxical effects of their enactment, their contingency upon boundaries that are drawn and negotiated elsewhere, and the political implications of their dispersed negotiations. While this critique resonates with the work of critical scholars who have also highlighted the convoluted dynamics of insider-outsider relations (Sturdy, Handley, et al., 2009; Wright, 2009), we contend that this literature has empirically not yet fully accounted for—and subsequently theorized—the unfolding processes in which boundary work is 'done'.

Building on an ethnographic study of actors' dispersed negotiations over the nature, scope, and significance of citizen engagement within a professional care facility, we set out to untangle the (dis)connections between boundary enactments that are performed over time and across different sites. This allows us to illuminate how such dynamics both affect and reflect the shifting power relations among the

actors involved. To better account for boundary work's processual, dispersed, and political character, we ask: (1) how do actors' disparate boundary enactments interact across time and space, and (2) how do such boundary-work sequences interact with the power relations among those actors whose respective positions are renegotiated in the process? By empirically grounding our analysis in the multiplicity of micro-interactions we observed in different locales throughout our fieldwork, as well as in both its moment-to-moment and longer-term dynamics, we are able to contribute new insights to the current literature. First, we develop a processual approach to boundary work for investigating actors' interconnected negotiations over divides between different actors (insiders vs. outsiders), issues (on vs. off the agenda), and authority positions (more vs. less able to exert influence beyond a formal mandate). This approach allows us to empirically demonstrate how disparate boundary enactments can be interlocked—i.e., how attempts at boundary effacement inadvertently trigger boundary (re-)enactment, and vice versa. Second, our analysis suggests that the 'transcendence' of established hierarchical positions does not mean that power asymmetries between actors become irrelevant. Even when outsider engagement becomes the formal policy imperative, its significance and viability, paradoxically, continues to depend on ongoing hierarchical support for 'non-hierarchical' organizing. Third, our paper shows that empirically studying messy, convoluted boundary processes calls for the adoption of long-term, multi-sited methodologies.

In what follows, we begin by critically reflecting on existing organizational-boundary studies. Next, we turn to our ethnographic study of a professional care organization's pursuit of citizen engagement—analyzing the processes in which actors try to (re)open and (re)erect new and traditional boundaries between actors, issues, and positions of authority. In the final section, we discuss our findings' implications for boundary-work theory and research.

3.2 BOUNDARIES AS TEMPORAL, SITUATIONAL, AND CONTENTIOUS CONSTRUCTS

Over the past decades (Child, 1997; Miles, Snow, & Pfeffer, 1974; Santos & Eisenhardt, 2005), scholars have increasingly acknowledged the need to soften the notion that boundaries are pronounced, one-dimensional demarcations between

an organization and its environment. Wright (2009), for example, demonstrates the ambiguity of organizational membership in his study of internal consultants who—being positioned inside an organization's formal boundaries but acting outside its hierarchy—strategically maneuver in order to accentuate their identity as either an insider or outsider, depending on its situational relevance. Likewise, Garsten (1999) points to the liminal position occupied by temporary employees who are drawn 'more closely into the normative organizational order' (Garsten, 1999, p. 612) by organizational leaders, while still being considered strangers in the workplace and excluded from the benefits enjoyed by those with full-time employment. Such accounts demonstrate that the notion of a boundary should not, conceptually, necessarily be tied to the idea of a formal organizational bureaucracy with clear-cut demarcations of membership, roles, and responsibilities. Instead, they highlight the socially constructed and situational nature of actors' status as an insider or outsider (whether self-proclaimed or ascribed by others). This, however, does not mean that boundaries have become any less important to structuring organizational life (Paulsen & Hernes, 2003). On the contrary, highlighting their 'multiplicity, complexity and dynamism' (Sturdy, Handley, et al., 2009, p. 42), boundaries have been stated to reflect the 'essence' of organizing (Santos & Eisenhardt, 2005).

In order to explore the intricacies of boundary work in organizational settings, we discuss boundaries' (1) processual, (2) dispersed, and (3) political character. Our discussion shows that while, on the one hand, extant scholarship has demonstrated boundaries to be temporally and situationally constituted—negotiated as concrete stakes in ongoing political struggles—it is, on the other hand, limited in its empirical exploration, and thus its theorization, of these dynamics. In essence, the literature has moved towards a 'more nuanced and contingent view of boundaries than that of the "black and white" insider-outsider notion' (Sturdy, Handley, et al., 2009, pp. 43–44), but it has yet to fully account for the intricate micro-dynamics that constitute broader insider-outsider relations.

Boundary work as a process First, boundary scholars commonly conceptualize boundaries as emergent phenomena that are actively accomplished through people's actions. For instance, Lamont and Molnár define boundaries as 'conceptual distinctions made by social actors to categorize objects, people, practices, and even time and space' that can be reflected in 'objectified forms

of social differences manifested in unequal access to and unequal distribution of resources (material and nonmaterial) and social opportunities' (Lamont and Molnár, 2002: 168; our emphasis). By conceptualizing boundaries as 'demarcations of social structure in action' (Sturdy, Handley, et al., 2009, p. 24), and thus situating such demarcations in 'messy socio-political processes that lead to particular organizational arrangements that are later perceived to be stable and "real"' (Heracleous, 2004, p. 101), analytic attention is directed towards people's boundary work, i.e., to the actions by which people erect, defend, dissolve, or move across divides as they negotiate the relationship between what is considered inside and outside (Gieryn, 1983; Zietsma & Lawrence, 2010). Studying boundary work in this way has proven a valuable lens for investigating how relationships between designated insiders and outsiders are negotiated and potentially transformed over time (e.g., see Bucher et al., 2016; Rodríguez, Langley, Béland, & Denis, 2007; Zietsma & Lawrence, 2010).

Although current boundary literature conceptually acknowledges that boundaries gradually emerge from social interactions, studies generally lack empirical grounding in both the short-lived, dispersed micro-interactions and the broader, long-term developments that constitute insider-outsider relations. Due to their reliance on historical reconstructions of boundary processes (e.g., Zietsma & Lawrence, 2010), analyses of formal documents (e.g., Bucher et al., 2016), or actors' more distant reflections in interview settings (e.g., Wright, 2009), such post-hoc reconstructions are limited in the extent to which they can encompass the situated actions through which boundary work is 'done' (Sturdy, Handley, et al. (2009) being a notable exception, although these authors do not yet systematically address boundary-work's sequential micro-dynamics). Importantly, these accounts tend to downplay people's 'disagreements over the present state of affairs and the direction action should follow' (Porter, Kuhn, & Nerlich, 2018, p. 893); yet how such disagreements are dealt with may considerably influence how boundary processes unfold. As such, we contend that, and demonstrate how, boundary-work literature would benefit from a more explicitly processual approach in which more attention is paid to both the short-lived and the long-range sequences of potentially contradictory boundary enactments through which insider-outsider relations are (re)constituted.

Boundary work as dispersed Second, boundary scholars have

emphasized that insider-outsider dynamics are shaped by a multitude of boundaries rather than by one single boundary (Hernes, 2004). Much research focuses on how an organization's formal boundary is 'spanned' (Aldrich & Herker, 1977), in particular zooming in on the work of the actors who do such 'spanning' (e.g., Ellis & Ybema, 2010; Kellogg et al., 2006). While these studies provide evidence of how individual actors 'work' at and on the notional boundaries of an organization, Yanow's (2004) study shows how the significance of front-line workers' boundary-spanning efforts (e.g., gathering information from customers) is contingent upon the extent to which the knowledge generated in such encounters is taken seriously by other actors within their organization. From this perspective, even when an organization's formal boundaries are spanned, such efforts remain conditional on internal boundaries negotiated elsewhere—e.g., on the extent to which decision-making actors place the gathering and use of 'external' information high on their organizational 'mattering map' (Yanow, 2004). Because activities across organizational boundaries may continue to be circumscribed by the boundary re-erecting work of actors in other settings (e.g., on different organizational platforms) or at another point in time, statements on how organizational boundaries are 'spanned' or 'transcended' thus require further elaboration.

While extant literature conceptually acknowledges the multiplicity, interconnectedness, and situationally constituted nature of boundaries, and while some empirical studies substantiate this claim, current research has only begun to scratch the surface of how boundary dynamics unfold at dispersed-yet-interrelated sites. Generally, boundary studies focus on a particular boundary that is being spanned—either across (e.g., Ellis & Ybema, 2010) or within (e.g., Wright, 2009) an organization's formal boundaries—and as such fail to explore the various sequences of in-situ boundary enactments within and across multiple organizational sites. In contrast, we investigate how outsider engagement is negotiated on multiple 'external' and 'internal' organizational platforms (i.e., within multiple series of meetings both between and among organizational members and non-members), allowing us to grasp both the connections and disconnections between such dispersed negotiations.

Boundary work as political Third, taking a more explicitly processual and situationally specific angle helps us to more fully explore boundary work's

political dimensions. Some studies have already demonstrated boundary work's inherently political character (Sturdy, Fincham, et al., 2009); for example, Sturdy and colleagues have demonstrated that 'the attractiveness of outsider knowledge is based on its relative political legitimacy within internal boundaries' (Sturdy, Fincham, et al., 2009, p. 635). More generally, boundaries become 'objects of strategic interest for actors motivated either to maintain or to disrupt systems of privilege' (Zietsma & Lawrence, 2010, p. 192). Existing studies thus view boundary work as inherently political, but they do not systematically capture the various ways in which power is exercised within boundary-work processes over time and across locales.

In order to address the politics of dispersed boundary processes, Lukes' (2005) three-dimensional view of power may help scholars appreciate how, first, actors may engage in direct and overt conflict within designated decision-making arenas—spaces in which powerful actors can affect the outcomes of decision-making processes in pursuit of their particular interests. Second, and alternatively, actors may prevent such conflicts from reaching decision-making processes in the first place—e.g., as they confine 'the scope of decision-making to relatively "safe" issues' (Lukes, 2005, p. 22). Third, and more subtly, people may try to 'secure compliance by controlling [other actors'] thoughts and desires' (Lukes, 2005, p. 27), i.e., by shaping their preferences in order to prevent conflict from arising in the first place. Translating this to the context of boundary work, this means that we should scrutinize: (1) how actors deal with explicitly conflicting boundary enactments as they negotiate their mutual involvement within the designated organizational platforms, (2) how actors manage to determine the boundaries of such platforms—i.e., as particular actors and issues are included or excluded (e.g., see Brown & Dillard, 2015) and (3) how actors more subtly try to synchronize others' views on 'appropriate' boundaries in order to further their own particular ideas and interests (Baxter & Montgomery, 1996). By investigating these multiple faces of power as exercised over time and across different locales, we can provide a fuller account of the political processes that shape insider-outsider relations within, between, and beyond different organizational platforms.

In sum, and in order to help us theorize the micro-dynamics that constitute insider-outsider relations, we define boundary work as the ongoing and interactive sequences of actors' situated efforts to establish, maintain,

challenge, and/or move across boundaries. Specifically, our approach to boundary work is, first, explicitly processual, as we analyze the sequences in which people demarcate and attach meaning to different 'sides', potentially triggering others to enact alternative boundaries. Second, and expanding on earlier work that acknowledges the potential ambiguity of insider-outsider relationships and the situated nature of boundary enactments (e.g., Heracleous, 2004; Porter, 2013; Sturdy, Handley, et al., 2009; Wright, 2009), we draw attention to boundary work's dispersed character: how are boundary enactments in different locales interrelated? And third, by taking such a processual and situationally specific angle, we are able to more fully explore boundary work's manifest, latent, and more hidden political dimensions, and thus to explore how it may affect as well as reflect established power relations among various actors and across various sites.

3.3 METHODOLOGY

In order to shed light on the temporal, situationally dispersed, and political qualities of boundary-work processes, this study builds on an ethnographic research approach (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012; Ybema et al., 2009). Ethnography enables us to investigate boundary work up-close to 'reveal its complexity and dynamism and its embeddedness in social relations (Sturdy, Handley, et al., 2009, p. 173). Conducted between June 2013 and December 2015, we build on two-and-a-half years of ethnographic fieldwork at CareOrg (a pseudonym), a large professional care organization that employed around 2,800 people and served over 3,500 clients. While directed and supported from its headquarters, the organization had geographically divided its operations into four service regions, each with its own management team. As a private, not-for-profit organization, CareOrg provided publicly funded services at its fifteen elderly care homes in a rural part of the Netherlands. As national criteria for care-home admission became stricter in early 2013, CareOrg faced increasing numbers of empty rooms in several of its facilities, compromising the organization's financial position. As a result, CareOrg management began considering either closing or redeveloping a number of its locations. In their exploration and development of such different scenarios, increased local-citizen engagement was marked as a key imperative.

As the organization renegotiated its relationship with local groups of citizens, we particularly focused on the boundary work that was performed around one such location: the care home it operated in the rural settlement of Carville (also a pseudonym). Although this care home was already facing the possibility of being replaced by new, smaller-scale facilities in 2018, whether or not it would be feasible to keep the 'old' home up and running until then was uncertain—at the very least, CareOrg would need to rely on an increasing number of volunteers in order to do so. The facility was the last of its kind in town, meaning that its residents would be forced to move to a different home in a different town should closure occur. Local citizens regularly stated their interest in keeping the facility open and the CareOrg leadership expressed their commitment to exploring such a scenario. Closing the home without first engaging with local citizens and looking for a joint solution would, according to the CareOrg director, 'run counter to the organization's identity as a rural service provider'. Moreover, the CareOrg leadership stated that successfully soliciting local volunteers' contributions would require the organization to 'make more space for others to participate' instead of 'decid[ing] ahead of time what things will look like'. With other facilities soon facing a similar situation, the organization considered the developments in Carville an important pilot case. Accordingly, the process of citizen engagement was monitored closely by CareOrg's central management team and supported by several advisory staff members from the organization's headquarters. Carville citizens, however, were reported (by themselves, as well as by CareOrg employees) to be hesitant to engage with CareOrg in a joint trajectory. They considered the organization to be 'foreign' to the town, having taken over the local facility only a few years earlier as the result of a merger. The precarious situation surrounding the care home reminded people of the closure of a large mental healthcare institution in town in the early 1990s—an event that still disturbed many Carville residents, who felt that 'they' [the institution's management] had taken the facility away from them. Many feared a similar fate for the care home.

Over the course of our fieldwork, we followed the processes in which employees and citizens both discussed the care home's challenges and negotiated the scope of their mutual engagement. In our analysis, we attempt to explain the sometimes-contradictory sequences of boundary enactments through which employees and citizens demarcated the scope of newly erected platforms for such

engagement. In particular, we paid attention to what constituted participants' beliefs regarding a legitimate scope for local citizen engagement and how they dealt with situations in which different, and at times contradictory, perspectives collided.

In order to empirically grasp the processual, dispersed, and political dynamics of such boundary-work sequences, we captured participants' dispersed-yet-interconnected interactions within multiple empirical sites. Our focus primarily revolved around observations of various periodic meetings—namely, those in which Carville citizens and CareOrg employees negotiated their mutual involvement—which we then combined with extensive periods of 'hanging out' in order to observe how such meetings were prepared and evaluated. We also observed the 'internal' meetings in which employees discussed the care home's situation and parameters of participation. As such meetings were situated in different physical and geographical locations (e.g., in the care home itself, in local community-owned venues in town, or at CareOrg headquarters, located an hour's drive away from Carville), we followed actors and issues as they 'travelled' across organizational platforms (van Hulst et al., 2017)—sometimes literally, accompanying participants as they travelled between sites and meetings. Such 'travelling' was conceptually significant to our analysis: moving back and forth between sites allowed us to grasp the connections and disconnections between people's boundary enactments across time and space. It allowed us to uncover the situated character of insider-outsider statuses and relations. For example, citizens' and local employees' positionings developed in diametrically different directions within, on the one hand, Carville-based interactions and, on the other hand, headquarter-based deliberations. By following these boundary enactments in-situ, we were able to capture ambiguities and contradictions that would have remained concealed if our empirical focus had been confined to a single empirical vantage point, or if we had relied on participants' post-hoc (e.g., interview-based) justifications for their actions.

Fieldwork was performed by the first author, who spent 38 days on site. In total, 45 meetings were observed, including both strictly internal CareOrg meetings, and meetings that also involved citizens and/or other local actors. Most meetings were audio-recorded and selectively transcribed. During the majority of meetings, the researcher's role was that of a mostly-passive observer. In the

latter part of the fieldwork, after having already attended meetings over a fairly long stretch of time, participants would sporadically ask for the researcher's input throughout their discussions. In such instances, the researcher refrained from taking sides with any of the actors, instead pointing out the various dilemmas or trade-offs observed in the process. During the final phase of our fieldwork, we organized two reflection sessions with CareOrg managers in various hierarchical positions in order to share our observations. This allowed us to check whether we 'got it right' from their perspectives, and, given that complete agreement among all actors is improbable, to better understand the interpretive discrepancies we had encountered (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012). During our final months in the field, similar discussions were informally held with other employees and local citizens, and used to refine our analysis. We included these sessions' transcripts and field notes in our data set.

Additionally, 16 interviews with both employees and citizens were audio-recorded and transcribed. Mostly taking place in the hours before or after meetings, these interviews provided us with a more grounded understanding of participants' motivations for and interpretations of the boundary work that took place within the observed interactions. Such opportunities also allowed informants to further elaborate on what they saw as legitimate positions for the different actors involved in the care home and to reflect on the situations in which these positions were (not) being enacted. In addition, they allowed us to specifically discuss the developments taking place within social settings that could not be observed directly. Interviews were individually prepared, enabling us to ask questions about respondents' motivations for and interpretations of the actions we had observed (e.g., how did participants: feel citizen engagement affected their own work, evaluate such changes, interpret other people's actions within observed meetings, etc.). When audio recording was not feasible, extensive field notes were made. Table 3.1 presents a more detailed breakdown of our observations and interviews. Alongside local media coverage, we also tracked CareOrg's internal and external publications throughout the duration of our fieldwork.

3.3.1 Analysis

Trying to incorporate disparate types of information on multiple levels, a key

Table 3.1 Overview of empirical material

DATA SOURCES	RESULTING DATA
45 meetings observed (mostly audio-recorded) 15 internal CareOrg meetings: • 13 with the Carville project team • 1 with the logistics department • 1 policy staff member's 'good-bye party' 30 meetings with local citizens: • 4 open-to-all public meetings • 18 citizen/employee working-group meetings • 1 with civil-society organizations • 3 with both citizens and professional third parties • 4 with residents' family and/or volunteers	38 hours of audio recording (selectively transcribed); field notes*
16 audio-recorded interviews and conversations 13 individual interviews and 3 group interviews (2-4 people): • 4 interviews with 3 different citizens • 12 interviews with 9 different employees, including: o 1 social worker (1 interview) o 3 policy advisors (8 interviews) o 3 local and regional managers (3 interviews) o 2 central-management team members (4 interviews)	9 hours of audio recording (fully transcribed); field notes*
38 days on site (ranging from 4-hour visits to overnight stays) • Numerous informal conversations, mainly before and after meetings • Extensive 'hanging out' before and after meetings, observing employees' everyday work	Extensive field notes*
2 audio-recorded reflection sessions with CareOrg employees • 1 with 2 members of the central management team • 1 with 4 employees in both leadership and advisory roles, from central, regional and local offices.	Almost 3 hours of audio recording (selectively transcribed)*

* Transcripts and notes together comprised a total of 154,338 words

challenge within our analysis was to make sense of our 'complex, messy, [and] eclectic' data set (Langley & Abdallah, 2011, p. 202). We were interested in how the parameters of outsider engagement were negotiated within local boundary-work sequences, but also in how these sequences related to structural processes of inclusion and exclusion. A key objective of our analysis, therefore, was to structure our data in such a way that we could investigate the relationship between 'macro' phenomena and 'micro' instances of ordering (Nicolini, 2009). This process already began during our fieldwork, which helped us continuously 'map' which actors and sites were most relevant to our study and/or required additional empirical scrutiny.

As a first step, and to capture the macro-dynamics of inclusion and exclusion (e.g., who was involved on which platform, what was the scope of each platform's agenda, how did the different platforms relate to one another and to those in decision-making positions, etc.), we composed a timeline (an excerpt of which is presented in Figure 3.1) and drafted a case narrative. Oscillating between the micro-dynamics of boundary work and their shifting structural embeddedness, we later decomposed our data into two main periods. These periods constituted comparative analytical units that were characterized by 'a certain continuity in the activities within each period and [...] certain discontinuities at its frontiers' (Langley, 1999, p. 703). This enabled us to investigate how actions within the first period led to more structural changes which, in turn, affected actions within the second period (Langley, 1999). In particular, we distinguished between a period before and a period after a central management crisis within CareOrg—a development that radically altered the boundary dynamics within our case setting. Within these two periods, we identified, coded, and compared both the concrete micro-instances of boundary work in which actors' structural positions and relationships were enacted or challenged, as well as the responses that such actions triggered.

Initial coding was based on our observations of the actions with which participants affected (or tried to affect) the relationship between (a) CareOrg employees and local citizens, and (b) CareOrg employees themselves. Throughout this process, we marked such data segments with labels that reflected their empirical context (e.g., 'challenging CareOrg legitimacy', 'determining the local group agenda', and 'calling for non-hierarchical decision-making'). Next, we

moved back and forth between these initial codes and our emerging process model of boundary-work sequences. We clustered and categorized the initial codes according to (a) the type of boundary to which participants' actions pertained (eventually identifying three key areas of distinction-making: actors, issues, and positions of authority), and (b) how such distinctions were addressed (i.e., attempts to (re-)erect or (re-)open boundaries). We then identified the sequences in which instances of (re-)erecting or (re-)opening boundaries were (dis)connected across time and space (i.e., we scrutinized boundary work's processual and dispersed dynamics). This allowed us to analyze how such micro-dynamics eventually changed between the two main phases of our fieldwork; i.e., as the broader organizational context was radically altered (helping us to grasp the shifting political dynamics of boundary work). In this way, we were able to untangle the processual, dispersed, and political character of the boundary-work sequences through which Carville citizens and CareOrg employees contested and gradually reconstituted their relationships.

3.4 FINDINGS

Focusing on how actors erected, challenged, and crossed multiple boundaries over the course of our two-and-a-half-year period of fieldwork, we now analyze the fervently debated and regularly reconstructed positioning of Carville citizens vis-à-vis CareOrg's local care home. In a nutshell, our observations revealed that, initially, advocates of citizen engagement seemed to transcend traditional boundaries by successfully establishing citizens' positions as insiders in the care home's situation. Over time, however, this local-insider position became increasingly marginal to central decision-making processes within CareOrg, which eventually thwarted the care home's entire existence. Against a background of the shifting power relations within CareOrg, the local transcendence of boundaries became obsolete when hierarchical boundaries were forcefully re-erected elsewhere and citizens were again excluded from the very processes with which they were initially invited to engage—highlighting boundaries' markedly processual, dispersed, as well as political character.

In order to offer a fine-grained analysis of the intricacies of the process, we set out to untangle and understand the interconnected boundary-work processes

directed at actors (seeing groups or individuals as insiders or outsiders), issues (the domains to which actors were considered an insider or outsider), and positions of authority (mediating the impact of local Carville-based actors on central decision-making processes). Within and across each of these areas (summarized in Table 3.2), we observed ongoing sequences in which actors engaged in discursive acts of effacing boundaries, as actors downplayed traditional divides and enabled movement across these, and discursive acts of erecting boundaries, as actors re-instated such divides and delimited or marginalized the newly created spaces for engagement. By scrutinizing such sequences across multiple locales, we were able to investigate how the exercise of power manifested itself within direct confrontations over contentious boundary enactments, but also how actors were able to prevent unfavorable voices or contentious issues from reaching discussion platforms or decision-making tables in the first place. Furthermore, our analysis showed how engagement advocates tried to win the 'hearts and minds' of both citizens and employees in order to create a broader support base for a more inclusive approach.

In what follows, we first zoom in on how actors both opened up and narrowed down local opportunities for engagement before zooming out again to examine the shifting power dynamics within the organization. While discussing these findings, we occasionally refer to Figure 3.1, which provides a temporal overview of the main case events and the broader shifts in boundary-work dynamics that shaped the character of citizen engagement. Moreover, Table 3.3 presents an overview of key empirical illustrations for each area of boundary work.

3.4.1 Zooming in: opening up and narrowing down spaces for local engagement

Already evident in our earliest observations in Carville, we witnessed a process that was inherently paradoxical: boundary opening tended to invite or provoke boundary erection and vice versa. To unravel this process, we now describe the interrelated dynamics of (1) actor-directed and (2) issue-directed boundary work.

Actor-directed boundary work Foundational to the pursuit of citizen engagement, we observed both employees and citizens performing actor-directed boundary work; i.e., during strategic deliberations over the care home's situation, these actors negotiated who was and who was not considered an eligible

participant. Organized by the CareOrg management and open to all inhabitants of Carville, the first public meeting between CareOrg employees and local citizens was the starting point of a trajectory meant to jointly explore and develop scenarios for the facility—creating, in essence, a platform on which to engage citizens that had, up until then, been excluded from such strategic processes [1a. in Figure 3.1]. 'Now it's your turn, people of Carville; [...] we desperately need each other in order to make this happen, hence our open invitation—to join us, to think along and to help us explore the possibilities' (invitation by CareOrg published in local weekly, September 2013). On a rainy Wednesday night in September 2013, approximately 60 people gathered in the care home's main hall. In his opening presentation, Frank, a CareOrg manager, consistently emphasized local citizens' important role in the process and reframed the care home's precarious situation as a joint challenge, stressing the interdependence of CareOrg staff and Carville citizens: 'We need to move beyond feelings of sorrow; closing the facility is a worst-case scenario, but it might happen if we don't work together' (notes, September 2013).

Table 3.2. Areas of boundary work

Actor-directed boundary work	Distinguishing between actors in terms of their eligibility as local participants *(e.g., membership on a local platform)*
Issue-directed boundary work	Distinguishing between issues that are (not) considered open to outsiders' engagement *(e.g., deciding on a local platform's agenda)*
Authority-directed boundary work	Distinguishing between actors' hierarchical positions and their ability to move across these *(e.g., whether local input is considered on central platforms)*

While such messages conveyed an attempt to transcend traditional us-them divides, they also produced the opposite effect. The citizens that attended this first public meeting did not instantly take up the insider role that had been solicited.

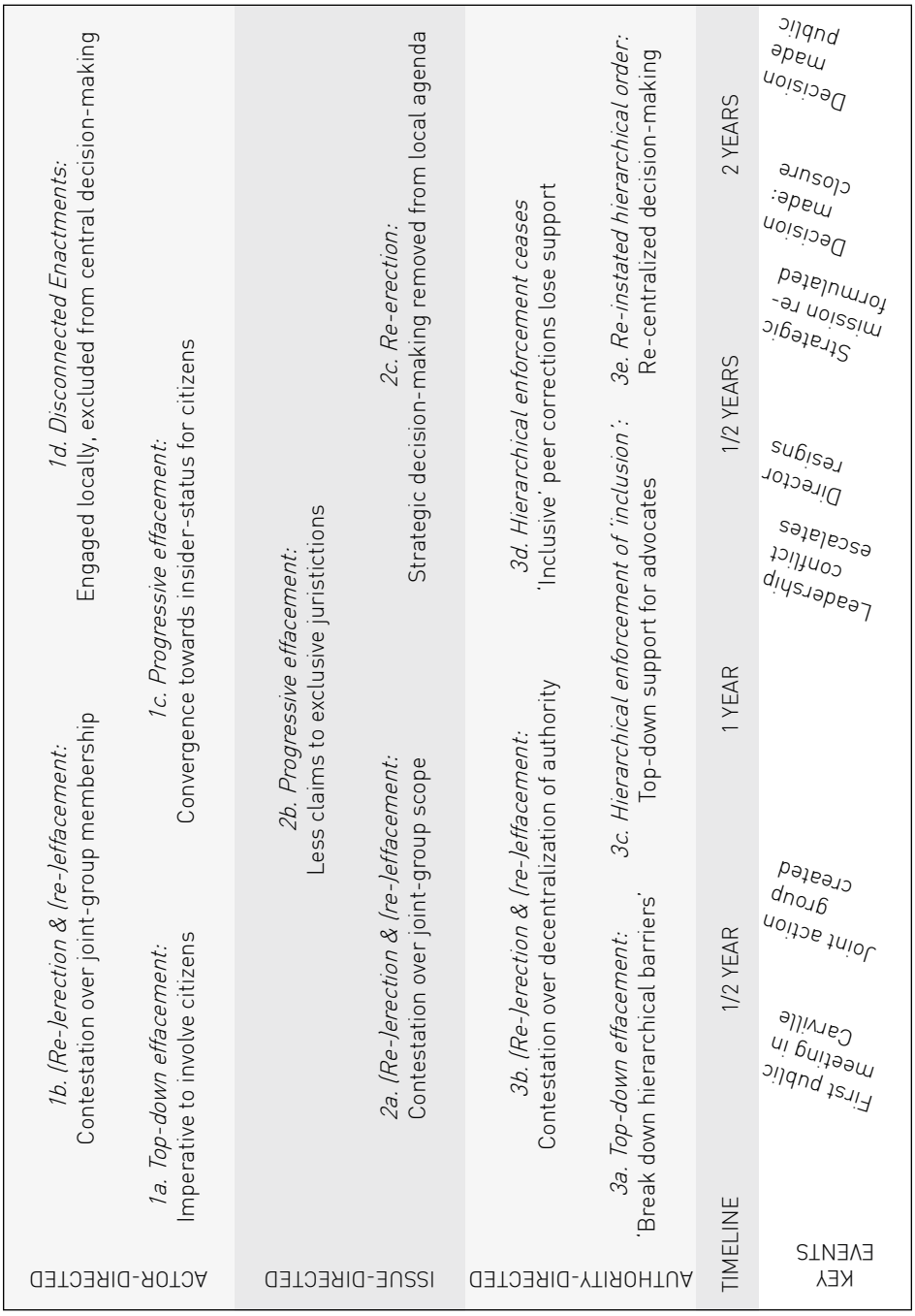
In fact, some responded by re-erecting barriers between CareOrg employees and citizens, either by excluding themselves as legitimate participants ('In the end, we're just amateurs from town.') or by questioning CareOrg's legitimacy, referring to the organization as an 'external commercial party' (notes, November 2013). Similarly, initial boundary effacing attempts also had a counter-productive effect on employees. Even long before this first public meeting, citizen-engagement advocates within CareOrg had been involved in—as one board member put it—the 'long and difficult process' of trying to 'open up co-workers' minds [to] look at things differently' (meeting transcript, October 2014) as they tried to gradually socialize colleagues into accepting a more inclusive approach. Nonetheless, some employees still raised an eyebrow when, during the initial meeting, manager Frank invited citizens to embark on a 'joint journey'. Employees could still be heard ridiculing citizen engagement backstage, stating that 'it's crazy we're doing this as an organization' (meeting notes, November 2014). In short, attempts to move across organizational boundaries ironically triggered both citizens and employees to re-instate divisive barriers.

Such paradoxical sequences of opening and (re-)erecting boundaries became particularly apparent as efforts to engage citizens became more concrete [1b. in Figure 3.1]. While it was possible to refer to poorly defined notions (e.g., 'the community', 'citizens', or 'the public') when talking about citizen engagement in the abstract, more explicit boundaries needed to be employed when determining which individual citizens would become part of the newly erected local platform. In particular, a 'joint action group' was set up to make citizen engagement in Carville more concrete. This group, which would include both employees and local citizens, was to meet monthly and make plans for safeguarding the care home's continuity. Marking the inclusive character of the process, the joint action group was itself a strong local symbol of boundary transcendence between employees and citizens. Once established, however, group membership turned out to be a contested issue. Employees, for example, initially refused to allow a particular community-interest group to be formally represented on the platform, accusing its members of 'backward thinking' and 'not representing the community's interests' (meeting transcript, July 2013). Moreover, several local citizens refrained from participating due to their explicit refusal to regard CareOrg as a legitimate partner. As such, throughout the process of determining group membership criteria, the

Table 3.3. Boundary effacing and erecting directed at (1) actors, (2) issues, and (3) authority.

	BOUNDARY (RE-)EFFACING	BOUNDARY (RE-)ERECTING
1. Boundary work directed at actors: insiders or outsiders	Articulating an inclusive 'we': 'They [townspeople] are starting to feel a shared responsibility; that it's not only our [CareOrg] problem' (*staff member*); 'If this facility isn't part of the community [...] then is its existence legitimate? I question that' (*director*).	Articulating a divisive 'us-them': 'You [CareOrg] are an external commercial party, you can't take the lead' (*townsperson*); '[These citizens] are a bit backward; [...] they don't represent the interests of the town' (*staff member*);
2. Boundary work directed at issues: on or off the agenda	Expanding the scope for participation: 'If you want to recruit volunteers from town, then you should also pay attention to [these local] concerns here' (*townsperson*); 'We decided to merge [short and long-term] groups, it's nonsense to continue separately' (*townsperson*).	Restricting the scope for participation: 'The joint group should cover short-term issues only, long-term shouldn't be guided by CareOrg' (*townsperson*); '[This issue] isn't something to discuss here, [the locals] should do that themselves' (*local manager*).
3. Boundary work directed at authority: engaged or disengaged in decision-making processes	Equalizing hierarchical differences: 'We don't want to make unilateral decisions regarding the continuation of services here in town' (*director*); 'The local manager should take the lead and identify local needs without worrying about the money [...] [and then he should say] "Felix [director], I need this much money"' (*external consultant*).	Underlining hierarchical differences: 'The management team will be making some decisions that will be shared with the rest of the team later. These decisions will change the strategic course we're on' (*board member*); '[The local manager]'s role has been marginalized, while others that have never even been here before are making the decisions' (*staff member*).

Figure 3.1. Case timeline: shifting dynamics within three interacting areas of boundary work



abstract notion of 'citizen engagement' became increasingly circumscribed—and, consequently, contested—as both employees and citizens specified boundaries in order to include and exclude particular actors as legitimate participants in the trajectory.

Nonetheless, over the course of the joint action group's continued meetings we observed increasing convergence in citizen members' positionings, which eventually coalesced into a more pronounced insider status [1c. in Figure 3.1]. For example, during a public meeting, one prominent Carville inhabitant and group member took the stage to state how at first she had been 'pretty cynical' about CareOrg's motives, but now—after learning more about the situation—'realized that they [CareOrg] were facing the consequences of national developments' for which CareOrg itself could not be blamed (meeting notes, May 2014). Her account was illustrative of citizen-members' shifting positionings. By discursively transcending the division between 'the town' and the care home, and by increasingly regarding CareOrg as a 'valuable partner' (meeting notes, November 2014), local participants progressively framed the care home's challenges as a shared concern of both CareOrg and the people of Carville. 'The care home doesn't stand in isolation—it's really a part of Carville, so we're doing this for the benefit of our town' (meeting transcript, February 2015).

Nevertheless, even as citizen members of the joint group developed a more inclusive identity, their insider status remained ambiguous; at times it was accentuated—e.g., when citizens and employees worked together—and at other times it was denied—e.g., when they were accused of 'shouting on the sidelines' or when they themselves still occasionally refused to acknowledge CareOrg as a legitimate partner. As a result, the formation of the joint action group—symbolizing the imperative of boundary opening—also triggered a host of boundary re-erecting and boundary re-effacing work. Accordingly, such sequences, and members' ongoing need to translate the abstract imperative of citizen engagement into concrete practices, resulted in employees' and citizens' continual contestation of 'appropriate' insider-outsider relations. Throughout this to-and-fro of boundary opening and closing, their orientations to citizen engagement—including the actor, issue, and authority-directed boundary work in which these orientations materialized—were gradually redefined.

Issue-directed boundary work Further zooming in on the emergence

of local spaces for citizen engagement, the boundary work we observed was not only directed at the 'who', but also at the 'what'. By engaging in issue-directed boundary work, actors negotiated which issues were considered to lie either within or beyond the scope of citizen engagement. These negotiations demonstrated the same paradoxical sequences—the to-and-fro of opening and closing—that we also observed in actor-directed boundary work. Likewise, the need to make the parameters of 'engagement' more concrete immediately raised contestation. Advocates of citizen engagement often used poorly defined concepts to delineate the legitimate scope for such engagement, generically claiming that they should be involved in 'decision-making', 'plan-making', or 'issues that concern them'. Such statements triggered further negotiations, causing both employees and citizens to apply more concrete boundaries as they disputed the issues that should or should not be opened up to citizens' scrutiny [2a. in Figure 3.1].

For example, as soon as actors' involvement was decided on (an act of actor-directed boundary effacement), negotiations ensued over the scope of their involvement (potential re-erection of boundaries). For example, during the second public meeting, when citizens were invited to take part in the joint action group, debate focused on the group's agenda:

> *Townsperson:* Will the group be allowed to think 'out of the box'? About different business models or alternative ways to use the empty rooms?
> *Steven* (CareOrg board member): The group will focus on the period up until 2018, to keep everything going until then.
> *Frank* (manager) [stepping forward to interrupt his colleague]: But of course you're welcome to think along about the period after that! [...]
> *2nd Townsperson:* We should broaden our scope here. Groups should be formed for both the short and the long term. The latter should be separate from CareOrg; long-term developments should come from within Carville itself. The first group can deal with [the facility's] current issues, the second should be about the community, led by locals.
> *Frank:* I'm not in favor of splitting this process in two. The long-term group's capacities are also needed in the short term!
> *2nd Townsperson* [firmly]: I will never agree to have one group that is led by CareOrg!

(notes, November 2013)

Clearly, while the joint group's agenda (i.e., the issues) was in itself already contested, negotiations over this agenda were intertwined with efforts to delineate group membership (i.e., the actors). Eventually, manager Frank reluctantly accepted the formation of two separate groups—inviting local citizens to help tackle short-term challenges in the joint action group while a second group, comprised solely of Carville inhabitants, was formed in order to focus on local care services in the more distant future.

Even after the joint action group began meeting regularly, the boundaries of its scope remained contested. By excluding citizen input on particular issues, CareOrg employees regularly restricted the local platform's agenda; e.g., by responding to local citizens' remarks with comments such as, 'That [issue] is not something to discuss here' (meeting transcript, September 2014). Such restrictions sometimes concerned relatively trivial issues, such as when an employee declined a citizen-member's input regarding the design of a leaflet because it did not fit CareOrg's 'corporate visual style' (meeting transcript, April 2014). At other times, however, employees also dismissed more-major concerns. Facing a dwindling local economy, citizens regularly suggested that CareOrg contract suppliers from town. Within the joint group, however, employees immediately disregarded this issue as, in their eyes, CareOrg's pursuit of economies of scale prohibited the discussion of local contracting (meeting transcript, October 2014). Such interactions often led to heated arguments in which group members interactively demarcated which issues were open to citizen input.

While the exact scope of citizen engagement remained a contentious issue, both citizens and employees seemed progressively less inclined to claim exclusive jurisdiction over specific issues or to disqualify 'the other' as an illegitimate actor [2b. in Figure 3.1]. For example, members of the aforementioned citizen-only group—which was established to focus on long-term issues for which CareOrg was considered an unfit partner—eventually, and after its most disapproving members had resigned, agreed to merge with the joint action group, stating, 'It's nonsense to proceed separately, because we need each other' (meeting transcript, April 2014). In turn, employees accepted that local citizens and community groups could determine the agenda for subsequent public meetings, which were open to

all Carville inhabitants. As they were 'consistently praised for being good partners in the trajectory' (meeting transcript, December 2014) and began to discover that a more inclusive agenda was beneficial to CareOrg's reputation, they strategically built on this notion to foster a more favorable attitude among the townspeople. By allowing citizens to define which issues mattered on the platforms on which they participated, citizen reluctance to acknowledge CareOrg's legitimacy as a partner seemed to diminish—again highlighting the interconnectedness of actor-directed and issue-directed boundary work as well as the more-subtle ways in which CareOrg employees tried to move the process forward.

In sum, when zooming in on the emergence of local spaces for citizen engagement, we witnessed both citizens and employees performing boundary work as they negotiated who was (not) allowed to 'sit at the table' (actor-directed boundary work) and determined what citizen engagement was (not) about (issue-directed work). Although advocates of citizen engagement pursued gradual effacement of the boundaries that separated organizational insiders from organizational outsiders, such attempts paradoxically triggered a contradictory surge of boundary re-erecting work (which, in turn, triggered subsequent re-effacing work). Our analysis shows that such paradoxical sequences of boundary (re-)effacement and (re-)erection were prompted by actions aimed at translating abstract ambitions into concrete practices. Subsequently, these actions gave rise to competing ideas as to who was eligible to participate and which issues this participation concerned. Although these boundaries were never completely settled, such sequences contributed to a gradual shift in how the actors involved defined the space for citizen engagement.

3.4.2 Zooming out: making or breaking the strategic significance of local engagement

So far, we have zoomed in on the sequences in which actors (re-)opened and (re-)erected boundaries as they gradually carved out local opportunities for citizen engagement. It is important to note, however, that the resulting local platforms—such as the joint action group—lacked any formal decision-making power. In other words, citizen-participants still relied on CareOrg employees to make sure their input was actually considered within 'internal' CareOrg decision-making processes. In this section, we zoom out to juxtapose local Carville

developments with the shifting power dynamics witnessed within the broader CareOrg organization. We discuss how these dynamics affected the developments surrounding the care home during the first half of our fieldwork (part I) and after a leadership conflict altered actors' respective positions and relationships (part II). To highlight the dispersed nature of the boundary-work processes, we describe the long-term sequences we observed of employees initially breaking down, before later forcefully re-erecting, hierarchical barriers, which eventually made the citizen engagement that occurred within local Carville platforms marginal to central CareOrg decision-making processes.

Authority-directed boundary work (part I): unsettling the organizational hierarchy To (re)construct the relationship between actors' different positionings within (or even outside) the organizational hierarchy, employees performed authority-directed boundary work that shaped the potential of local perspectives and interests to flow between organizational platforms and impact more centralized decision-making processes. Since the beginning of the trajectory in Carville, Felix, CareOrg's then-director, had urged his colleagues to break down hierarchical barriers whenever they hampered meaningful citizen engagement [3a. in Figure 3.1]. He emphasized that he wanted to 'make sure that the decision [of whether to close the care home] [was] not just made in the boardroom or by the management team, but by a broad range of people involved with the facility' (notes, June 2013). To further support this process, a considerable number of staff members from the organization's headquarters were assigned to be involved in, and follow up on, the care home's developments. Moreover, the director also took it upon himself to personally attend a joint action group meeting. In these ways, CareOrg's central leadership tried to promote citizens' insider-status within the local platforms on which they were engaged while also making sure that citizen input would be effectively 'taken forward' and considered within internal decision-making processes.

Nonetheless, employees' imperative to transcend hierarchical boundaries regularly triggered other employees to re-erect these [3b. in Figure 3.1]. Both within internal CareOrg meetings and in discussions with citizens, employees sometimes declined local citizens' suggestions by, e.g., stating that the organization 'already [had] a policy for that' (meeting transcript, October 2014). In such instances, others would step in to enforce the principle of inclusivity—e.g.,

by ensuring local participants that her colleague would 'carefully follow up on these comments [and] discuss them with [his] supervisor'. Despite local citizens' lack of formal authority, such peer-to-peer corrections—intended to re-efface the hierarchical boundaries that had been re-erected—had the effect of stimulating employees to nevertheless take citizen suggestions and comments forward.

Paradoxically, top-down support for boundary effacement enabled citizen-engagement supporters 'on the ground' to indeed soften the organizational hierarchy and to promote an inclusive approach by effectively (re-)effacing boundaries between actors and issues [3c. in Figure 3.1]. For instance, Matilda, a senior staff member, was assigned to facilitate processes of citizen engagement with the explicit mandate to interfere and correct her colleagues whenever she felt they did not sufficiently acknowledge and act upon citizen input. As long as citizen engagement remained a prominent feature of the central management team's 'mattering map' (Yanow, 2004), advocates for such engagement were able to broadly signify the importance of treating citizens as insiders to the trajectory. By successfully effacing established internal boundaries and correcting colleagues who engaged in their re-erection, employees could make sure that local input mattered throughout the organizational hierarchy.

Authority-directed boundary work (part II): forcefully re-erecting barriers So far, we have examined how the hierarchically endorsed imperative to soften the organizational hierarchy played out within the local Carville spaces. Simultaneously, however, this imperative—as well as the broader strategic course of the organization—was also being challenged on higher levels of management. Specifically, CareOrg's medical staff started to oppose the director's attempts to keep its rural care homes open, which ended up prompting a leadership conflict with considerable consequences. Although the medical staff had, up until then, barely been involved in the Carville trajectory, they increasingly began to object to attempts to sustain the rural care homes, instead preferring services to be more concentrated within fewer, medically better-equipped nursing homes (news coverage, February 2015). What ensued was described as a 'classic power struggle' (interview transcript, December 2015), underpinned by conflicting views on the organization's core business and on what constitutes 'quality care'. In the process, the medical staff approached local media to express their concerns:

> They [the medical specialists] said, 'This policy isn't good for the elderly [...] and we're here to save them.' [...] And Felix [the director] personified this policy.
>
> (staff member, interview transcript, April 2015)

While their critique was not solely directed at CareOrg's strategy of citizen engagement, it did significantly affect the dominant policy discourse, which up until then had stressed such engagement as a strategic focal point. In March 2015, Felix resigned as a result of the medical staff's disapproval and was replaced by an interim director. In the period that followed, the central management team triggered a process of 'strategic reorientation', which in turn recalibrated what was seen as CareOrg's core business. As a result, the new leadership moved towards a more medicalized and internally focused approach to care provision. Cynically, one staff member claimed that they, as CareOrg employees, were now forced to 'hide behind our high walls, with our doctors' (notes, July 2015), disregarding the particular needs and interests of local citizens.

Substantially altering the dynamics within local boundary work sequences, such changes within higher management came at the cost of citizen-engagement advocates' symbolic resources in boundary negotiations elsewhere [3d. in Figure 3.1]. Whereas the previous management team had endorsed the boundary work and peer-to-peer corrections made by those advocating for a more inclusive approach, the organization's newly articulated strategy both legitimized those who erected more-pronounced barriers between CareOrg employees and citizens, and granted local staff less influence over increasingly centralized decision-making processes [3e. in Figure 3.1]. Two key staff members who had been involved in the trajectory, one of which was Matilda (the staff member assigned to emphasize citizen engagement), resigned shortly after the director. With their resignations, the joint action group's direct connection to CareOrg's central management team disappeared, heavily compromising the extent to which local negotiations were able to traverse the organizational hierarchy. In the period that followed, Jeff, the local care-home manager in Carville, lamented that the head office felt 'sooo far away now' (notes, July 2015). Confirming Jeff's remarks, a consultant who had temporarily supported the process of citizen engagement complained that she was no longer authorized to talk to anyone important and that Jeff's role was

marginalized as decisions were now made by other managers 'that have never even been here' (notes, July 2015). After a period in which hierarchical barriers had been progressively 'broken down', the new management team reinstated strict lines of authority that sidelined both local staff and citizens.

Illustrating the renewed hierarchical boundaries and shifted priorities, a CareOrg board member announced in an internal meeting that the interim director would be making 'some difficult decisions' that might impact the process in Carville (meeting transcript, April 2015). Although the departing director, Felix, had recently proclaimed that after many years of making a profit in Carville he considered it 'reasonable to accept the current losses for the next few years' (interview transcript, April 2015), the new management, just a few weeks later, announced that the organization could not survive without a speedy reorganization. In July 2015, the board decided to close the care home within one year—one-and-a-half years earlier than originally planned. To the frustration of those still involved in engaging local citizens, employees received clear instructions to hold off on discussing the decision with citizen members of the joint action group. The new board's decree symbolized both the new, more-strictly bounded scope of local citizen engagement and its curtailed significance to central decision-making processes [2c. in Figure 3.1]. Despite persistent local rumors, local volunteers were only officially informed of the management's decision three months later. In their attempts to re-efface the new hierarchical barriers and re-claim their position as insiders in the trajectory, local employees and citizens, who objected to management's unilateral decision to close the facility, asserted that 'a management team can't just [do this,] they have a town that also has a seat at the table' (meeting transcript, April 2015). Nevertheless, given the reinstated hierarchical order that had come to characterize CareOrg's decision-making processes, such efforts had become futile [1d. in Figure 3.1].

In conclusion, by comparing our observations before and after the change in leadership, we see that CareOrg's radical shift in policy significantly changed the power dynamics of participants' boundary work. Initially, managerial initiatives had systematically promoted citizen engagement and sanctioned actors to open up internal hierarchical barriers in order to make such engagement effective. Instead of merely creating an open space for participation, however, such top-down boundary effacement resulted in ambiguity on the ground, which

fueled negotiations over—and thus increased the symbolic significance of—new, more precise or refined boundaries. For instance, while boundary-effacing work gave rise to local platforms for citizen engagement, these platforms' members engaged in boundary-setting work in order to demarcate who would be engaged and on which issues. In turn, when such boundary-setting was seen as overly constraining the space for engagement, others would try and correct this by attempting to re-open these very same boundaries. In a nutshell, formal policies intended to transcend well-established boundaries actually gave rise to intensified sequences of boundary (re-)erection and (re-)effacement—both within and across three key areas of distinction-making: actors, issues and positions of authority.

Ironically, our findings show that ongoing boundary work by actors who held formal positions of authority was necessary to ensure the effective effacement of hierarchical boundaries. Once the initial hierarchical support for citizen engagement had eroded and the new management had reinstated strict hierarchical boundaries by decree, similar boundary re-effacement attempts proved less viable. Whereas the previous imperative of boundary effacement had implied that 'local' perspectives must be attended to, the newly reinstated boundaries more clearly indicated whose perspectives needed to be considered—and whose did not. As a result, the objections of both local staff and citizens to closing the care home could be 'legitimately' discarded. Upon reflection, we conclude that the potential withdrawal of hierarchical support for a non-hierarchical way of working had always been hanging over the trajectory like a sword of Damocles. Local boundary negotiations and the resulting engagement of Carville inhabitants were strategically significant only as long as CareOrg's central leadership agreed to this premise. In other words, for local actor-directed and issue-directed boundary effacement to 'matter' within central decision-making, effective authority-directed boundary effacement proved to be a necessary condition. Our findings highlight the fundamental power imbalance between central-management actors and both local employees and engaged citizens, even when the latter's engagement is the official policy imperative. In the end, successful boundary effacement is at the mercy of those who control their possible re-instatement.

3.5 DISCUSSION

Building on other critical studies that refute the notion of boundaries as clear-cut divisions between organizations and their environments, we investigated the fine grain of the boundary dynamics triggered by the engagement of organizational 'outsiders'. Our findings confirm that boundaries, while not acting as clear-cut demarcations, nonetheless remain central to structuring organizational life (Paulsen & Hernes, 2003). In fact, attempts at transgression or erasure paradoxically turned boundaries into symbolic rallying points, which allowed us to investigate the intricacies of processual, dispersed, and political boundary-work dynamics. Going forward, we now turn our attention to the theoretical, methodological, and practical implications of our study.

Boundaries constitute a significant focal point for studying human relations in organizational settings since they reflect 'the essence of [the process of] organization' (Santos & Eisenhardt, 2005, p. 505). Our approach substantiates this notion and illuminates the convoluted and often-paradoxical dynamics that underlie this process. As a first contribution, by explicitly accounting for its processual (temporally sequenced) and dispersed (spatially situated) dynamics, our approach to boundary work reveals that, ironically, attempts at transcending organizational boundaries intensify actors' boundary work, provoking ongoing negotiations within and across multiple organizational platforms and triggering often-unanticipated temporal sequences. Instead of providing a snapshot of one type of boundary work, we analyzed how actors (1) bargained over who 'sits at the table' (actor-directed boundary work), (2) debated the scope of their involvement (issue-directed boundary work), and (3) negotiated the extent to which local participants could affect central-management decisions (authority-directed boundary work). By tracing actors' ongoing boundary enactments within and across these three areas of interest, we were able to witness the kaleidoscopic to-and-fro of boundary effacement and boundary erection, thus untangling the messy processes that both affect and reflect shifting insider-outsider relationships. Consequently and importantly, witnessing one type of boundary work occurring on one platform at one point in time is of limited analytical value and can even be misleading when making sense of putative insider or outsider statuses. As we have shown, any single act of boundary construction may directly or eventually trigger

an opposite effect, or may simultaneously be counteracted on another platform at another point in time. For this reason, such acts only become meaningful when analyzed as part of a stream of interrelated moves and countermoves, and placed against the backdrop of boundary work done elsewhere. By analytically focusing on the spatially and temporally situated boundary work through which actors negotiate the parameters of insider-outsider positionings and by sensitizing themselves to contradictory and counterintuitive patterns and processes in their analyses, researchers can improve their accounts of the sometimes-paradoxical connections between consecutive or concurrent boundary enactments.

Such paradoxical sequences and situational contradictions, we believe, deserve more systematic research attention, particularly when studying the 'messy' boundary dynamics typical of most organizational settings. Crucially, attempts at transcending or effacing boundaries and pursuing inclusiveness still evoke questions about who or what is (not) considered to 'matter' within an organization (Yanow, 2004); triggering intensified boundary-work sequences and paradoxically eliciting boundary re-erection. Distinction-drawing, in tandem with boundary effacement, thus remains at the heart and soul of any process of organizing. In contradistinction to the notion of the 'boundaryless organization' (Hirschhorn & Gilmore, 1992) or to any plan or policy designed to integrate organizational, professional, or functional fields or units, attempts to erase boundaries will—subsequently or simultaneously—provoke the re-drawing of boundaries and making of categorizations. In essence, while acts of boundary effacement constitute symbolic moves that may or may not reconfigure how others perceive divides within or between organizations, these acts do not put a halt to people's inclinations to draw distinctions, nor do they automatically settle competing perspectives on how to efface (or indeed re-erect) boundaries. Consequently, researchers need to become more sensitive to how acts of boundary effacement tend to both increase the salience of organizational divides and trigger actors to make these divides explicit.

How, then, does our approach differ from other approaches within existing boundary-work literature? Zietsma and Lawrence's (2010) influential study, for example, is also rooted in a processual approach to boundary work. The difference, we contend, lies in that our study takes the processual conceptualization of boundary work one step further. By referring to the 'state' of boundaries (p.

213) and by speaking of boundaries 'around' an organizational field (p. 190), Zietsma and Lawrence tend to use boundaries themselves as a starting point before investigating how they are subject to processes of change. In contrast, our analysis primarily looks at people's in-situ boundary enactments. This subtle-but-significant difference reflects 'two versions of the social world: one, a world made of things [i.e., boundaries] in which processes represent change in things; the other, a world of processes [i.e., boundary-enactment sequences] in which things are reifications of processes' (Van de Ven & Poole, 2005, p. 1379). When we analytically reify boundaries—i.e., when we disconnect them 'from the process that created them' (Bakken & Hernes, 2006, p. 1601)—we also risk obscuring some of the constitutive processes of insider-outsider relations. For example, by highlighting boundary work's processual and dispersed nature, our approach sensitizes us to both the possibility and the consequences of diametrically-opposed boundaries that can be enacted across different locales and/or at different points in time—the locally engaged, yet centrally excluded position of Carville citizens being an illustrative case in point. Moreover, our approach brings into focus how boundary effacement actually requires ongoing boundary work, as it cannot be assumed that one's acts of inclusion will resonate with other actors or in other social settings. It thus illuminates the contested and situationally constructed nature of insider-outsider divides, the parameters of which may be constructed differently by different actors and within different social settings. In sum, if we restrict our analysis of outsider engagement to temporally or spatially isolated acts of boundary spanning, then we turn a blind eye to the multi-sited, moment-to-moment quality of boundary opening and boundary closing that characterizes actors' bargaining over 'appropriate' insider-outsider relations. By conceptualizing boundary work as ongoing boundary-enactment sequences, we can account for the interactive and often-paradoxical dynamics that lay beneath the surface and beyond the horizon of any single act of boundary work within confined organizational settings.

Our critique of parsimonious boundary conceptualizations resonates with critical work in the field of management consultancy (e.g., Alvesson et al., 2009; Wright, 2009). Here, scholars have called for a more dynamic approach to boundaries and highlighted 'the need to specify insider-outsider relations with respect to what, whom, and when' (Sturdy, Handley, et al., 2009, p. 172). While

this strand of work has significantly contributed to a more dynamic concept of boundaries, we contend that its implications have yet to be fully fleshed out within empirical analyses, which still largely rely on interview data (e.g., Alvesson et al., 2009; Wright, 2009). While Sturdy et al.'s (2009) work also draws on observational data in capturing insider-outsider dynamics, our current focus on situationally dispersed boundary negotiations within and between multiple empirical sites allows us to expand extant theorization by scrutinizing how actors' situated boundary enactments are (dis)connected across space and time. By engaging in first-hand observations of boundary-work processes as witnessed within and across multiple social settings, our study provides the empirical groundwork required to grasp the 'short-lived factors and changes' (Van de Ven, 2007, p. 212) that affect how insider-outsider relations are shaped over time and across sites. This, in turn, also makes it possible to more fully explore these relationships' emergent and dispersed power dynamics—an issue we will now explore in greater detail.

As a second theoretical contribution, our study demonstrates that, despite possible efforts to transcend hierarchical boundaries, established power imbalances continue to shape the relations between actors across and beyond the organizational hierarchy—sometimes within direct confrontations and oftentimes by sidelining opposition or by keeping potentially problematic issues off of the agenda (the eventual decision to close the venue being a cynical example). By following actors and issues throughout a variety of formal and informal settings, we were able to capture the differential impact of central actors' boundary enactments on locally performed boundary work: top-down boundary effacement legitimized local actors' engagement while simultaneously intensifying the performance of boundary work, whereas top-down boundary re-erection unambiguously shut down such space for negotiation and dissolved local actors' influence. As a consequence, we conclude that—even when endorsed by formal policies and successfully pursued within participatory processes—outsider engagement remains vulnerable to the whims of central actors' priorities. For example, even when local Carville citizens were (eventually) granted influence within the newly erected local platforms for engagement, this did not guarantee that their input would actually reach central decision-making agendas, nor did it imply that all employees were fully convinced that citizen perspectives indeed

mattered. When 'external' actors lack the formal means to advocate on 'internal' platforms, their so-called empowerment appears to remain highly situated and contingent upon established power relations. While we certainly do not claim that efforts to engage with designated outsiders are necessarily futile or unproductive, we do contend that the effectiveness of an inclusive and non-hierarchical approach paradoxically depends on ongoing hierarchical support and managerial enforcement.

By acknowledging the persistence of such power dynamics in the pursuit of boundary transcendence, our approach is relevant beyond our current focus on citizen engagement. In particular, investigating boundary-enactment sequences may provide a useful analytical lens in other empirical settings that also involve attempts at non-hierarchical coordination against a background of existing hierarchical positions and relations. For example, research on employee participation in organizational change initiatives indicates that attempts to move across hierarchical lines may still 'result in existing asymmetrical power relations being accepted and normalized' (Thomas & Hardy, 2011, p. 325). Similarly, studies of teamwork (e.g., Chreim, Langley, Comeau-Vallee, Huq, & Reay, 2013; Finn, Learmonth, & Reedy, 2010) have shown that despite teamwork's 'ostensibly egalitarian rhetoric' (Finn et al., 2010, p. 1152), power inequalities continue to shape teamwork dynamics, both among team members and within a team's relation to the broader organizational hierarchy (Barker, 1993). Within such fields of research, our approach may help scholars appreciate the layered and complex character of attempts at so-called boundary spanning. It helps to highlight the intricate and dispersed boundary-work dynamics, and the potentially paradoxical sequences that may ensue, as actors strive for 'participation' or 'horizontal mutual adjustment'—triggering the overt or covert power play or self-disciplinary control that may effectively delimit the scope of such efforts.

This brings us to our third and final contribution. In order to adequately unravel such interconnected boundary-enactment sequences, we believe that researchers' methodological and analytical focus should move back and forth between the various empirical sites in which boundaries are (re-)erected, challenged, or transformed in order to trace emerging (dis)connections across these sites. Accordingly, we have honored Van Hulst, Ybema and Yanow's (2017) plea to ethnographically follow people, things, and issues as they travel across

different locales. 'Instead of offering a static account of organizational settings and structures, or of a team, organization or community in isolation or in two-way interactions, the "following fieldworker" travels along with, or "trails", actors, interactions and/or artefacts, "mapping" over time and across locales, levels and domains' (Van Hulst, Ybema, & Yanow, 2017, p. 233). In our case, in order to lay the empirical groundwork necessary to make claims about local cross-boundary dynamics and their contingencies on broader power relations, we followed both actors—i.e., we 'shadowed' (McDonald, 2005) designated boundary-spanners as they traversed through internal and cross-boundary spaces and assumed different positions within different organizational arenas—and issues¬—i.e., we tracked the issue of outsider engagement as it was negotiated throughout decision-making processes within and across multiple organizational communities.

As this methodological strategy of following makes it inherently challenging to anticipate which processes and spaces will significantly intersect and how, fieldwork must be set up to maximize exposure (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012) to those boundary-work sequences that shape the position of outsiders in relation to internal work processes. For our, and indeed for any, such study, fully realizing such exposure proved impossible in terms of time and difficult in terms of access, especially as one can never consistently predict which meetings or platforms will give rise to the interactions most relevant to the research questions at hand. Importantly, future research following this approach should first and foremost keep an eye on both those organizational spaces in which actors attempt to resist or oppose the discourse endorsed by those in power and on the ways in which people try to neutralize such resistance in their frontstage or backstage interactions. Such sensitivity to silent or silenced resistance (or, alternatively, to resistance to resistance) may help prevent blind spots from developing, i.e., it may prevent fieldworkers from losing sight of the actors and issues that remain 'disconnected' from what is being followed.

In addition to these three theoretical contributions, our approach to boundary work also suggests a number of practical implications for citizens, professionals, managers, and policy makers who pursue citizen engagement. First, we caution advocates not to approach citizen engagement as a 'one-off' issue of institutional (re)design—a notion that still pervades much of the literature on citizen engagement (e.g., Fung, 2006). Importantly, the job is not

done after a local space for citizen engagement has been created. Instead, this is when the real work begins: advocates should be prepared to make an ongoing investment in dealing with recurrent contestations over the scope and impact of participation—facing a range of actors with often-competing interests and divergent perspectives on what citizen engagement should look like (Glimmerveen, Nies, & Ybema, 2019; Glimmerveen, Ybema, & Nies, 2018). In particular, our study shows that citizen-engagement advocates must not turn a blind eye to the 'internal' organizational dynamics that precipitate or are triggered by 'external' alignment with citizens. While in our study their participation on local platforms appeared to be increasingly productive, citizen engagement eventually proved futile after being sidelined by the new management team as it reinstated strict lines of authority and terminated the initiative. Given that the impact of citizen engagement is, to a large extent, negotiated outside the arenas designated for such engagement, participation advocates should expect to play on multiple 'chessboards' at the same time. It may require a substantial investment to engage with those actors who may not be 'natural' proponents of citizen engagement (e.g., financial controllers, medical specialists, logistics managers, etc.) and to make sure that local boundary effacement is recognized and deemed significant beyond its immediate context.

Second, our findings shed a different light on the prevalent idea that effective participation (or any attempt at cross-boundary engagement) is at odds with centralized control (e.g., Loeffler & Bovaird, 2016). While participation by definition requires a degree of decentralized control, our findings suggest that hierarchical enforcement may sometimes be necessary in order to 'internally' advocate for participation among front-line employees who would otherwise not be inclined towards citizen engagement. At the same time, however, hierarchical enforcement without street-level discretion and dedication may be equally ineffective. Still, we caution against the tendency among citizen engagement advocates to see decentralization as a panacea for participation.

Third and finally, our study also shows that citizen engagement advocates should be reflexive about the often-unrealistic expectations and unintended consequences that may turn citizen engagement into a high-maintenance and high-risk initiative—both for the participating citizens and for the organizations that pursue their engagement. Participation is not a magic bullet for service

improvement. In fact, and especially, when predicated on unrealistic expectations of alleged organizational-boundary transcendence it is more likely to frustrate rather than empower those who choose to participate.

3.6 CONCLUSION

Our study of outsider engagement refutes the popular notion of boundary transcendence as the new model of and for organization (Hirschhorn & Gilmore, 1992). Building on the idea that 'changes towards fluidity and complexity should not be taken as synonymous with boundaries disappearing' (Paulsen & Hernes, 2003, p. 4), our analysis of boundary work's processual, dispersed, and political dynamics shows that the alleged transcendence of organizational boundaries remains a highly circumscribed process. In our study, actors' temporally sequenced and spatially situated boundary enactments typically exposed a constant to-and-fro between (issue, actor and authority-directed) boundary opening and boundary closing. As such, our analysis has demonstrated how formally sanctioned boundary effacement from 'up above' can paradoxically trigger intensified actor and issue-specific boundary work 'on the ground'. Moreover, we have shown how the top-down re-erection of hierarchical boundaries—a move that effectively marginalizes those lacking formal authority—can be equally contentious. In fact, such a re-instatement of hierarchical order unambiguously shuts down potential space for negotiation, highlighting the persistence of power imbalances despite attempts to soften them. As a result, internal organizational hierarchies, professional-turf matters, and us-them antagonism remain, however ironically, germane to the heart of attempts to transcend organizational boundaries.

CHAPTER 4

BARGAINING OVER THE 'WHAT'

Empowering citizens
or mining resources?
The contested domain of
citizen engagement in
professional care services

Abstract – When studying individual attempts to foster citizen engagement, scholars have pointed to the coexistence of competing rationales. Thus far, however, current literature barely elaborates on the socio-political processes through which employees of professional organizations deal with such disparate considerations. To address this gap, this article builds on an ethnographic study, conducted in the Netherlands between 2013 and 2016, of a professional care organization's attempts to engage local citizens in one of its elderly care homes. To investigate how citizen engagement is 'done' in the context of daily organizing, we followed employees as they gradually created and demarcated the scope for such engagement by approaching citizens as either strategic partners (pursuing 'democratic' rationales) or as operational volunteers (pursuing 'instrumental' rationales). In order to deal with such potentially incongruent orientations, we found that employees used discursive strategies to influence the balance that was struck between competing rationales; either through depoliticization—i.e., the downplaying of incongruities and the framing of disparate considerations as being complementary within the pursuit of a shared, overarching goal—or through politicization, i.e., the active challenging of how their colleagues prioritized one consideration over another. By showing how the successful conveyance of such (de)politicized accounts helped employees either defend or redraw the boundaries of what citizen engagement was (not) about, we contribute to extant theorization by (1) developing a processual approach to studying citizen engagement that (2) is sensitive to organizational politics.

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4.1 INTRODUCTION

Promoted as a way to improve the responsiveness of care services that have become too bureaucratized, commercialized or professionalized (Needham, 2008; Nies, 2014), citizen engagement is currently in vogue as a guiding principle for welfare-state reform (Callaghan & Wistow, 2006; Marent et al., 2015). Policy makers have challenged professional care organizations to recalibrate their relationships with citizens, communities and community organizations, stimulating them to see these as partners in the process of designing and delivering care services (Bovaird, 2007; Pedersen & Johannsen, 2016). Nonetheless, concrete attempts at fostering such engagement rarely seem to result in the partnerships that so many policies promise and promote¬—even when these ambitions are supported by a broad range of actors (Marent et al., 2015; Osborne & Strokosch, 2013). Often intended to boost efficiency (Bovaird, 2007; Fotaki, 2011) or legitimize decisions that have already been made by those in power (Lee & Romano, 2013; Taylor, 2007), such participatory efforts, scholars point out, tend to be more contentious and more complex than advocates sometimes suggest.

Attempting to make sense of the intricate course of events and unexpected outcomes, several authors have drawn attention to the seemingly inherent complexities of participatory processes. First, they have pointed to the elusive meaning of catch-all terms like 'citizen engagement' and 'public participation'—both in the academic literature and in everyday use. Attempting to provide more conceptual clarity, scholars have developed typologies to categorize disparate practices of, and actors' various rationales for, citizen engagement (e.g., Arnstein, 1969; Bovaird, 2007; Marent et al., 2015). Second, scholars have drawn attention to differences between organizations. Research has demonstrated that the organizational context that embeds participatory efforts shapes the resultant position of citizens vis-à-vis decision-making processes (Croft, Currie, & Staniszewska, 2016). Third, scholars have shown that different actors—even

within a single organizational setting or participatory process—consider different forms of engagement appropriate (Callaghan & Wistow, 2006; Cornwall, 2008; Fotaki, 2011). Although these studies help us appreciate the complexities of citizen engagement, they barely touch on the dynamics that not only surround the practical treatment of such coexisting, potentially competing orientations, but also, as a result, shape the manifestation of engagement efforts over time within particular organizational settings.

In order to address this very issue, this article investigates the processes through which employees of a professional care organization made sense of and dealt with competing orientations to citizen engagement. After observing employees' emphases on either 'democratic' or 'instrumental' rationales for such engagement, we have analyzed how actors intermittently depoliticized or politicized the working balance between such disparate orientations in their attempts to shape the character of participatory efforts and, in the process, challenge or reaffirm established management practices within their organization. By building on our ethnographic study, we contribute to extant literature in two ways. First, while earlier studies tend to provide static accounts of participatory processes, we demonstrate the merits of a processual approach to theorizing the social dynamics surrounding competing orientations to citizen engagement. Second, we show that both internal management practices and organizational politics are more than just the 'organizational context' that shapes citizen-engagement efforts (Croft et al., 2016). Instead, organizational politics lie at the very core of participatory processes as they unfold over time. Before turning to our case study of a professional care provider's attempts to engage local citizens, we first ground our power-sensitive processual approach in the extant literature on citizen engagement in planning and delivering care services.

4.2 GRASPING THE NATURE OF CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT

While building on different concepts and themes—such as co-production (Ewert & Evers, 2014; Needham, 2008), participatory governance (Durose, 2011) and public participation (Marent et al., 2015; Martin, 2008a)—various strands of literature from the fields of healthcare policy, public administration and organization studies share an interest in the changing role of citizens in organizing healthcare and

other (semi-)public services. In practice, the boundaries between such different conceptual approaches are ambiguous. Participation, for example, is argued to be an 'infinitely malleable concept [that] can easily be reframed to meet almost any demand made of it' (Cornwall, 2008, p. 269). Similarly, the concept of co-production is said to have 'excessive elasticity' (Needham, 2008, p. 224), lacking a 'dominant, coherent narrative' (Ewert & Evers, 2014, p. 427) as it is applied to a wide range of practices and seen from a variety of perspectives. As such, pinpointing and understanding what exactly is changing in the role of citizens has become a widely stated challenge for scholars, policy makers and practitioners alike.

Attempting to create more conceptual clarity, various scholars distinguish the different rationales behind governments' and provider-organizations' pursuit of citizen engagement (Bovaird, 2007; Martin, 2008a; Osborne & Strokosch, 2013). Across the aforementioned literatures, a common distinction is made between, on the one hand, 'democratic' rationales for engaging citizens and, on the other hand, 'instrumental' motivations (Bovaird, 2007; Martin, 2008a; Osborne & Strokosch, 2013). The former refer to attempts to strengthen citizens' voice, emphasizing their roles in 'democratizing' the process of service planning, design and management, while the latter signify a more instrumental interest in citizen contributions, leading employees to solicit citizens to complement or replace professional services in the areas in which delivery falls short (Bovaird, 2007). Such different rationales suggest different citizen positionings in relation to professional service organizations.

Reflecting on the disparate reasons for pursuing engagement, some scholars critically demonstrate that professional or governmental initiatives are often presented as being 'a contribution to more democracy by empowering citizens [and] emphasizing dialogue' (Marent et al., 2015, p. 831) while eventually serving as a much narrower 'means to an end, to increase the acceptance, quality, and effectiveness of particular programs and services' (ibid) or to support cost-containment measures (Fotaki, 2011). In their study of organizations' use of public deliberation, Lee and Romano emphasize that the literature 'typically assumes that its emergence and growth is functional—that it is a useful way of actually facilitating less hierarchical, more responsive and flexible decision-making [...] [but] when scrutinized in more depth, deliberation processes are loosely coupled

with decision-making, or even irrelevant to it altogether' (Lee & Romano, 2013, p. 735). In a similar vein, Croft and colleagues (2016) demonstrate that managers tend to co-opt citizens into managerially framed roles—particularly in organizations with a rational-hierarchical style of management. Instead of assuming the desirability of participatory practices, these accounts demonstrate that we should first empirically assess both how disparate rationales for engaging citizens play out in practice and how they affect citizens' positioning in the organization of care services (Contandriopoulos, 2004; Pedersen & Johannsen, 2016). Consequently, the question of how to understand the everyday work practices in which such different rationales materialize is key and, thus far, under-researched.

4.3 COEXISTING RATIONALES FOR CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT

In capturing its complexities and often unforeseen or undesired outcomes, several scholars have pointed out that different views on the 'appropriate' domain for citizen engagement—and, accordingly, 'appropriate' participatory practices—tend to coexist (Fotaki, 2011). 'In practice, all of the forms and meanings of participation [...] may be found in a single project or process' (Cornwall, 2008, pp. 273–274). Indeed, when citizen engagement means something different to those involved in the same participatory process, this constitutes 'a source of ambiguity, at locality level, about the status of those involved' (Callaghan & Wistow, 2006, p. 2292): with what exactly should citizens (not) be engaged?

To better understand such ambiguity, we must acknowledge that participatory practices are embedded in heterogeneous organizational environments in which people face competing norms, rules, ideals and objectives (Callaghan & Wistow, 2006; Fotaki, 2011). Likewise, citizen engagement is shaped by, and can be at odds with, established organizing principles in public service management. For example, participatory practices are contingent upon and restricted by the particular (e.g., more or less hierarchical) management practices prevailing within an organization (Croft et al., 2016; Pedersen & Johannsen, 2016) while care professionals might also delimit the spaces that are open for 'legitimate' participation (El Enany, Currie, & Lockett, 2013). Moreover, when trying to engage citizens within a market-based care system, 'making money by capturing customers easily overrules the building of trust-based relationships'

(Fotaki, 2011, p. 946). Accounting for these competing principles and orientations draws our attention to the almost inherently contentious nature of any particular approach to citizen engagement (Contandriopoulos, 2004).

As a result, investigating how those involved deal with the contentious nature of citizen engagement and, subsequently, how their responses affect the direction in which participatory processes develop becomes crucial. Generally lacking firm empirical grounding in the day-to-day practices in which citizen engagement gradually unfolds, current literature provides us with a theoretical framework that is limited in its extent to capture such dynamics. Most scholars seem to account for disparate orientations towards engagement by analyzing structural organizational aspects—i.e., by focusing on actors' particular positions within the organizational chart (Durose, 2011; Pedersen & Johannsen, 2016) or by looking at how organizational processes are structured (Callaghan & Wistow, 2006; Croft et al., 2016). El Enany and colleagues (2013) do provide a temporal perspective on the emergence of different participatory roles, but they only indirectly touch on the competing rationales for engagement that may coexist within a single organization. In short, by providing temporal snapshots that neglect the 'turbulent, dynamic context' (Croft et al., 2016, p. 31) in which participatory practices are situated, most citizen-engagement studies offer aprocessual accounts and/or fail to grasp the political dynamics through which such engagement materializes.

4.4 DEMARCATING A DOMAIN FOR ENGAGEMENT: A SOCIO-POLITICAL PROCESS

How, then, can we shed light on the significance of this 'turbulent, dynamic context' and move beyond static conceptualizations of the relationship between professional organizations and citizens? First, we must refuse to assume the stability of, or agreement about, the concepts people employ when organizing their work, using instead a processual approach to study unfolding negotiations over the meaning and implications of citizen engagement. By viewing acts of organizing (e.g., engaging citizens) as, essentially, 'attempt[s] to order the intrinsic flux of human action, to channel it towards certain ends by generalizing and institutionalizing particular cognitive representations' (Tsoukas & Chia, 2002,

p. 567), pursuing citizen engagement becomes about the ongoing processes in which people interactively try to channel disparate notions of what such engagement means—what it is and what it is not—and how this affects the way they go about their work.

Second, we conceptualize attempts to demarcate what citizen engagement is (not) about as instances of boundary work (Gieryn, 1983). As boundaries both distinguish insiders from outsiders and shape their relationships, acting as 'an essential medium through which people acquire status and monopolize resources' (Lamont & Molnár, 2002, p. 168) and therefore become objects of strategic consideration, a focus on boundary work has proven fruitful for studying the relational dynamics of organizational processes. In our study, we focus on both the processes through which employees demarcate different domains for citizen engagement and how they deal with such differences; investigating these as profoundly socio-political processes in which people 'struggle over and come to agree upon definitions of reality' (Lamont & Molnár, 2002, p. 168). While health-services research commonly takes a boundary work perspective to studying professional jurisdictions (e.g., Powell & Davies, 2012), we contend that boundary-work concepts can also be applied to the study of citizen engagement—illuminating the 'symbolic struggle [...] [over] the imposition of specific meanings or perspectives' (Contandriopoulos et al., 2004, p. 1575) within negotiations over citizens' jurisdiction in participatory processes (El Enany et al., 2013).

Third, when investigating processes of citizen engagement, we must recognize that boundaries are multiple and potentially incongruent. Scholars of organizational boundaries have demonstrated that actors employ different types of boundaries when making sense of different aspects of their relationships to others (Hernes, 2004). For example, in their study of flexible organizations, Hirschhorn and Gilmore (1992) speak of authority, task, political and identity boundaries. By distinguishing such different boundaries, this literature sensitizes us to the possibility that employees direct their boundary work at different dimensions when negotiating their relationships with citizens; e.g., some might particularly call into question 'who is in charge of what' (authority boundaries) while others might try to redefine 'who is doing what' (task boundaries) (Hirschhorn & Gilmore, 1992). In such a context, disparate motives for citizen engagement may inform contradictory boundary enactments.

In order to examine their effects on the unfolding of participatory processes, our study focuses on how employees of a professional care organization deal with incongruent boundary enactments as they demarcate the domain for citizen engagement. Drawing attention to how organizational actors make sense of the (dis)connections between competing rationales for engaging citizens, we investigate whether or not they contend that such rationales 'can be combined without undue tensions' (Llewellyn, 1998, p. 43). In short, we show that actors either (1) downplay the contradictory nature of disparate orientations—effacing existing boundaries to present a harmonious state of affairs in which competing rationales are subordinated to a shared, overarching objective—or (2) highlight their incongruous nature and use this to legitimize a struggle over the organization's strategic course. We will demonstrate how such different responses constitute subtle discursive political strategies that have the potential to either politicize or depoliticize (Palonen, 2003) an organization's approach to citizen engagement. Through successful (de)politicization, actors respectively open up or close down spaces for questioning both the treatment of competing rationales and, more fundamentally, the purpose of citizen engagement. Based on our empirical analysis, we contend that investigating the efficacy of such (de)politicizing accounts contributes to our understanding of how participatory processes unfold and why they do (or do not) deliver on their promises of democratization.

In sum, if we are to understand the intricate and emergent qualities of citizen engagement, we must (1) acknowledge its inherently processual nature by recognizing people's socio-political boundary work and (2) understand how competing rationales and contradictory boundary enactments are dealt with when negotiating an 'appropriate' domain for citizen engagement. Such a power-sensitive processual analysis enables us to fill a gap in the extant literature by offering a more practice-based appreciation of citizen engagement and by revealing its political dynamics as actors demarcate citizens' jurisdiction and bargain over its consequences for care-service management.

4.5 METHODOLOGY

By building on an ethnographic case study of the developments surrounding

an elderly care home in the rural town of Carville (a pseudonym) as conducted by the first author, this paper investigates how employees of CareOrg (also a pseudonym) negotiated and made sense of their changing relationships to local citizens. Ethnography 'combines an orientation towards subjective experience and individual agency in everyday life with sensitivity to the broader social settings and historical and institutional dynamics in which these emerge or are embedded' (Ybema et al., 2009, p. 7; also see Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012). An in-depth and up-close investigation of the case setting, which stretched over two-and-a-half years, enabled us to illuminate how citizen-engagement practices were gradually shaped in the everyday interactions that unfolded against a backdrop of managerial support (or a lack thereof). The various actors involved held different (power) positions, had disparate conceptions of an 'appropriate' jurisdiction for engaged citizens and pursued contradictory goals.

In particular, our case analysis focuses on the processes through which employees and citizens explored the feasibility of keeping the care home open until its scheduled replacement by smaller-scale facilities several years later. In order to continue daily operations, the organization was forced to rely on the efforts of an increasing number of volunteers. Resonating with their policy imperative of 'creating caring communities', CareOrg's director emphasized that the organization had to increasingly involve local citizens on decisions that potentially affected them while simultaneously tailoring services to meet their particular needs. Exacerbating the urgency of the situation, CareOrg faced an increasingly pronounced incentive to contain costs due to stricter eligibility criteria for public funding, leading to empty rooms in the home and a looming financial deficit. Pursuing the involvement of local citizens for both democratic and instrumental reasons (i.e., for both strengthening citizen voice and containing costs), the developments in Carville provided fertile ground for studying (1) how employees dealt with competing rationales for citizen engagement as these were 'put to discursive effect' (Martin, 2008a, p. 51) while (2) allowing us to investigate how emerging participatory efforts challenged, reinforced, and/or were shaped by internal management practices. The particular empirical context in which we study these issues might differ from, for example, government-initiated citizen-engagement programs or examples from different healthcare systems. Still, we believe that the relevance of our findings extends across such empirical contexts.

Table 4.1 Overview of empirical material

DATA SOURCES	RESULTING DATA
45 meetings observed (mostly audio-recorded) 15 internal CareOrg meetings: • 13 with the Carville project team • 1 with the logistics department • 1 policy staff member's 'good-bye party' 30 meetings with local citizens: • 4 open-to-all public meetings • 18 citizen/employee working-group meetings • 1 with civil-society organizations • 3 with both citizens and professional third parties • 4 with residents' family and/or volunteers	38 hours of audio recording (selectively transcribed); field notes*
16 audio-recorded interviews and conversations 13 individual interviews and 3 group interviews (2-4 people): • 4 interviews with 3 different citizens • 12 interviews with 9 different employees, including: o 1 social worker (1 interview) o 3 policy advisors (8 interviews) o 3 local and regional managers (3 interviews) o 2 central-management team members (4 interviews)	9 hours of audio recording (fully transcribed); field notes*
38 days on site (ranging from 4-hour visits to overnight stays) • Numerous informal conversations, mainly before and after meetings • Extensive 'hanging out' before and after meetings, observing employees' everyday work	Extensive field notes*
2 audio-recorded reflection sessions with CareOrg employees • 1 with 2 members of the central management team • 1 with 4 employees in both leadership and advisory roles, from central, regional and local offices.	Almost 3 hours of audio recording (selectively transcribed)*

* Transcripts and notes together comprised a total of 154,338 words

Our case study allows for a process-based and power-sensitive theorization of how organizational actors deal with disparate considerations for engaging citizens—a challenge that has been identified as cutting across service domains and national contexts (e.g., Cornwall, 2008; Fotaki, 2011).

Empirically, we focused on CareOrg managers and policy staff members—the employees directly facilitating the trajectory—as they interacted with citizens and with each other to demarcate 'appropriate' domains for citizen engagement. We draw on three sources of data: (1) observations of employees' meetings with citizens, organized to discuss the situation of the care home and negotiate their respective roles within this situation; (2) observations of 'internal' project meetings, as employees discussed their approaches to citizens; and (3) interviews and conversations in which employees reflected on what they saw as 'appropriate' citizen engagement and its implications for their own work, which also allowed participants to share their perspective on events that occurred during our observations. Combining interviews with observations of in-situ interactions allowed us to move beyond participants' post-hoc justifications of their behaviour, instead witnessing in real time how they actively (re)drew and negotiated the various boundaries that structured employees' and citizens' relationships. Table 4.1 provides an overview of the data on which this study is based.

4.5.1 Data analysis

As a first step, we coded those data segments that captured the sayings and doings that contained explicit or implicit references to people's rationales for engaging citizens and the domains to which this engagement should apply. By analyzing the resulting in-vivo codes (e.g., 'citizens should lead', 'don't decide in the boardroom', 'volunteers replace paid jobs', 'professionals retain control') and by moving back and forth between this analysis and the extant literature on boundaries and citizen engagement, we recognized two approaches that each proposed a different type of boundary to be redrawn in the relationship between citizens and employees ('authority' and 'task'). Building on this analysis, we composed an overview of the two dominant orientations to citizen engagement as they emerged from our data: strategic partnerships versus instrumental volunteers (summarized in Table 4.2). While these competing rationales resemble those described in the extant literature (e.g. Bovaird, 2007), our ethnographic

data allowed us to further elaborate on the socio-political dynamics that emerged from their coexistence. Going back to our data, we coded and analyzed those segments in which employees made sense of and responded to the different orientations prevailing within their organization (e.g., 'healthy tension', 'keeping the right balance' vs. 'fundamental problems', 'putting up a fight'). By organizing and analyzing these segments, we inductively distilled two main responses to the competing orientations to citizen engagement: (1) their portrayal as complementary viewpoints in pursuit of a shared overarching goal or (2) their problematization by identifying a divide between two incompatible orientations. As such, actors respectively depoliticized or politicized the competing orientations to citizen engagement within their organization. The emergence of (de)politicization as a key theme in our analysis prompted us to study additional literature on the issue and inspired us to further reflect on how employee responses to competing orientations related to the broader political context in which work processes were organized within their organization.

Lastly, in the final stage of our fieldwork, we organized two formal sessions with key stakeholders and conducted several informal discussions with other employees and local citizens to check whether we 'got it right' from their perspectives (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012), using these to further refine our analysis.

4.6 TWO DISPARATE ORIENTATIONS TO CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT

4.6.1 Pursuing democratic governance: engaging citizens as strategic partners

In Carville, the first dominant orientation to citizen engagement we encountered highlighted local citizens' potential role as strategic partners within the care home's situation. Promoted by the official policy discourse and the CareOrg leadership, this approach suggested that boundaries delineating who could legitimately take part in decision-making processes needed to be redrawn. Rooted in a wider idea that 'care homes can be patronizing' (policy advisor, meeting transcript) and that 'people know very well how they want to live their lives' (nurse, interview transcript), proponents of this view regularly stressed the need to 'make more space for others to participate' (general director, meeting notes), sometimes explicitly refusing to delimit the scope of citizen involvement:

> We're not going to tell them [citizens] what this master plan will look like [...], they should be in the lead instead!
>
> (Policy staff member, meeting transcript)

> [In discussion with local managers:] Our starting point is to never say 'no' to any request from town.
>
> (Director, meeting notes)

Enforcing the notion of citizens as strategic partners, the management team appointed a senior staff member to support local citizens in creating a 'local infrastructure', enabling them to not only mobilize people, but also to articulate a shared voice and to play a role in local governance issues:

> They should become a group that starts to take things over, to do things and want things [...], forming a proper mouthpiece as partners in the discussions within this trajectory. They should organize themselves within all these plans being made.
>
> (Policy staff member, interview transcript)

By treating local governance as a core domain for citizen engagement, employees acknowledged that traditional boundaries of authority had blurred, compromising their own abilities both to 'decide ahead of time what things will look like' (regional manager, meeting transcript). Instead of 'formulating SMART objectives, which is what we normally want' (policy staff member, meeting transcript), CareOrg staff stated the need to be 'more modest' about the extent to which they were 'in control' of work processes and refrain from 'making unilateral decisions about the future of the town's care services' (general director, meeting notes). In short, motivated by a desire to strengthen local citizens' positions in the governance of services, employees would often challenge the boundaries that had previously made decision-making processes an exclusively professional domain.

4.6.2 Seeking instrumental contributions: engaging citizens as operational volunteers

Among employees, we identified a second, concurrent dominant orientation to

Table 4.2. Two orientations to citizen engagement

	CITIZENS AS STRATEGIC PARTNERS	CITIZENS AS OPERATIONAL VOLUNTEERS
Reason for change	Current situation is patronizing	Current situation is unaffordable
Type of reconstructed boundary	Authority boundaries (who is in charge of what?)	Task boundaries (who is doing what?)
Domain of engagement	Decision-making, governance	Operational work processes
Trajectory's governance model	Egalitarian: bottom-up, start with blank slate	Hierarchical: Top-down, strong management, clear conditions
Main measure for success	Citizens 'in control' of local services	Cost containment

citizen engagement. Instrumentally approaching them as a source of labour, employees saw citizen involvement as a potential substitute for the paid work that had become unaffordable in the wake of public funding cuts. Emphasizing the need to downsize CareOrg's professional workforce, staff members explored options to replace some of the work done by paid staff with local volunteers. To reconstitute an 'appropriate' division of labour between staff and volunteers, CareOrg's HR department began analyzing which job titles within the organization could, potentially, be replaced by volunteers. Moreover, the logistics manager mentioned that his department was 'exploring which volunteer activities could save us most money' (logistics manager, meeting transcript). Indeed, his supervisor stressed that the added value of citizen engagement 'is only effectuated when we reorganize and let go of paid staff' (logistics director, meeting notes). Evidenced, in part, by the fact that participatory practices were referred to as a way of 'mining resources' (manger, meeting transcript), citizen engagement was mainly seen as a means to realize the cost-containment that was deemed necessary for the care home's survival.

While treating citizens as operational volunteers suggested a shift in 'who

is doing what' (i.e., task boundaries), established boundaries of authority were not fundamentally questioned as it involved a less profound alteration of employees' own roles in managing services. Highlighting CareOrg's ongoing responsibility for its daily operations, the logistics manager noted that: 'We'll need a really good policy and strong management of volunteers to make sure we continue to meet quality standards' (logistics manager, interview transcript). After identifying how many volunteers were needed and for which activities, employees subsequently monitored these numbers to see if citizen engagement would pay off—i.e., save money and contribute to the care home's survival. Throughout this process, instances were noted in which employees suggested 'applying pressure' to local citizens in an effort 'to stimulate the influx of volunteers' (logistics manager, meeting transcript). On the whole, citizen engagement was regularly presented as being a logistical operation, one that required enough volunteers to safeguard the continuation of CareOrg's service provision without questioning CareOrg's position of being 'in charge'.

4.7 DEALING WITH DISPARATE ORIENTATIONS TO CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT

4.7.1 Depoliticizing differences: effacing boundaries in pursuit of an overarching goal

With such democratic and instrumental rationales existing side by side, we focused on how CareOrg employees made sense of, and dealt with, situations in which these orientations suggested contradictory courses of action. While employees acknowledged that, when considered in isolation, the pursuit of either rationale was legitimate, there was, at times, a clear trade-off between the two. As a result, the coordination of competing rationales was often stated as one of the core challenges in engaging citizens:

> The art is to—and this is our dilemma—to think like a business and along institutional lines with one half of your brain, while at the same time trying to let go, to truly let go [as citizens take on their own roles]
>
> (Regional manager, meeting transcript)

Statements like these depoliticized the differences between such disparate rationales. While differences were not denied, employees essentially effaced any sharp distinction between the two rationales, framing democratic and instrumental considerations as two sides of the same coin in pursuit of a shared, overarching goal: to provide financially sustainable care services over which citizens experience an increasing degree of ownership.

> It's also a healthy tension. [...]. Somebody needs to critically look at this from a financial point of view and from a quality-of-care perspective [...]. If you don't create that tension in your organization, then you're at risk of making one aspect too prominent.
>
> (General director, interview transcript)

> We all have a central aim and that's the client—who should be able to continue living here. But then, as a company, we also have a financial interest. [...] For other colleagues with a [different] perspective, money isn't their main interest, they want people to have a say and to have ownership. [...] We're in an ongoing dialogue, [...] and normally we end up somewhere in the middle. I believe those are the best solutions.
>
> (Logistics manager, interview transcript)

Instead of employing strict boundaries and highlighting the incommensurability of these disparate orientations, employees downplayed any fundamental differences, preferring instead to portray the tension between democratic and instrumental rationales as being functional and desirable. CareOrg's director stressed that the heads of the various departments were tasked with safeguarding 'their' particular sub-interests and that, in light of the organization's core mission, all of these sub-interests needed to align. Taking such a functionalist perspective, dealing with competing orientations was actually evidence of—and integral to—good management.

4.7.2 Politicizing differences: emphasizing incompatibility

What such depoliticizing accounts concealed—intentionally or not—was opposition. Those that opposed the dominant paradigm did not always 'just'

strive to protect their particular sub-interest within the larger whole, they also tried to challenge the status-quo within their organization. While participatory governance and cost savings were both recognized as valid objectives, CareOrg employees still came to different conclusions about the relative importance of such considerations and how they needed to be dealt with.

> Within our internal project team, there's Matilda, who thinks from a care perspective. Whereas we think logistically. And those are different things. [...] She always questions whether people have enough choice and a say in what we offer [...] while we tell clients that they have to purchase [these extra services]. [...] We always stress the financial side of things.
>
> (Logistics manager, conversation transcript)

Investigating how employees dealt with such different positions and perspectives, we observed a second dominant response: some employees made sense of differences in a more overtly political way. Refuting the harmonious portrayal of complementary viewpoints, these employees would challenge the self-evident and collective character of the 'common goal' to which competing sub-interests were subordinated.

> Our strategic compass [CareOrg's official mission statement] was very much our director's compass.
>
> (Policy staff member, interview transcript)

> [The logistics manager] thinks this is one big joke—that we're crazy for doing this as an organization.
>
> (Policy staff member, interview transcript)

Indeed, there was a lack of consensus regarding CareOrg's overarching mission. Each using different standards for striking the 'appropriate' balance between competing considerations, employees explicitly challenged the extent to which other colleagues neglected citizens' voices or, alternatively, accepted a financial deficit. While the general director consistently presented democratic and

instrumental rationales as being complementary, he did admit that 'it was often a struggle to make sure that money was not the sole consideration' (general director, interview transcript). Trying to redefine the primacy of one perspective over another, employees actively (re)politicized their disparate viewpoints as they distanced themselves from alternative orientations as well as the allegedly shared goals that were used to legitimize how competing orientations were being aligned.

In what follows, we present a narrative to illustrate how employees in and around Carville oscillated between depoliticizing and politicizing accounts over time and, as a result, effectively shaped what was considered a 'legitimate' approach to citizen engagement within their organization.

4.7.3 (De)politicizing accounts in practice: keeping the care home open?

The care home's precarious situation left employees with a conundrum: could they keep the care home open in order to meet citizens' voiced interests while simultaneously attracting enough volunteers to reduce CareOrg's financial deficit to an acceptable level? Notably, the definitions of 'enough' and 'acceptable' were highly debated.

> When times were better we made a profit, so you could argue that it's justifiable to invest when times are harder. [...] But it's all a matter of how you value these things; others might do it differently.
>
> (General director, interview transcript)

When a management conflict over the strategic course of the organization started to escalate, this specific struggle became particularly apparent. Initially, the general director seemed successful in depoliticizing the tension between citizens' voices and financial considerations (calling it a 'healthy tension' within the pursuit of a shared 'overarching goal'). Eventually, however, the divide between democratic and instrumental orientations ultimately got re-politicized. CareOrg's medical staff, which until then had barely been involved with the developments in Carville, began protesting the alleged 'overarching goal' that repeatedly stressed was by the director, i.e., his attempts to keep the organization's rural-based care homes open, including the one in Carville.

> The doctors say this policy is no good—they claim it's not good for the elderly, they suffer from it, and say 'we're here to protect them and oppose this policy'.
>
> (Policy staff member, interview transcript)

The medical staff portrayed the organization's official strategic course as being irreconcilable with what they considered 'good care', choosing to explicitly politicize the decision to keep the care home in Carville open. In what employees called a 'classic power struggle' (policy staff member, interview transcript), underpinned by different understandings of the organization's core objectives, the medical staff approached local media to share their concerns and announce their lack of confidence in the director, ultimately leading to his resignation.

While the medical staff's critique did not primarily revolve around the organization's approach to citizen engagement, their opposition to CareOrg's central policy increased the efficacy of other actors' opposition that until then were neutralized as being 'the other side of the coin'. This significantly affected the dynamics of how competing orientations were handled within the organization. Following the director's resignation, an interim director quickly initiated a process of 'strategic reorientation'.

> Soon, we'll all be clear on what our organization is about, what we invest in and to which things we say: 'we need to clean this up, because we're losing money and don't see any viable potential'.
>
> (Board member, meeting transcript)

Indeed, CareOrg's core mission, which up until then had been coined as 'creating caring communities', was soon redefined as 'providing care and treatment', signalling the return to a more medical approach to care provision. Employees saw this as a considerable shift that changed both the extent to which local citizens' voices mattered and the extent to which they should be included in decision-making processes around the care home. As this process continued, distinctively instrumental motives for engaging citizens became more pronounced:

> [It used to be] about collaboration, about togetherness, about opening up to the needs and desires of the community. [...] Now you hear colleagues saying: why don't you develop this programme for the volunteer caregivers, because we're still doing too many things that they should be doing.
>
> (Policy staff member, conversation transcript)

Approximately six months after the former management had announced that the care home would stay open, the new management decided to shut it down in an effort to 'clean up' the facilities where money was being lost. Just as the former director had defended his decision to keep the facility open, the decision to close the facility was equally presented as the outcome of a (non-political) balancing act between, on the one hand, the imperative to respond to local citizens' needs and, on the other hand, to safeguard the organization's financial continuity.

> The desire to invest in local communities is still in our genes, but doing so in this case has become impossible. We really tried to find a solution to continue service provisions, but everything we tried turned out to be futile.
>
> (Interim director, meeting transcript)

Whereas the previous director had come to the conclusion that honouring citizens' voiced interests outweighed the importance of CareOrg's compromised financial status (stating that it was 'justifiable to invest when times are harder'), the organization's redefined core mission allowed the interim director to consider the same competing issues and arrive at an opposite conclusion. As a result, the care home was closed and the citizens that had initially been engaged to prevent 'unilateral decision-making' were only informed about the decision several months after it had been made.

In sum, reflecting on these developments in Carville, we found that CareOrg employees engaged in two forms of boundary work. First, we witnessed them negotiating the parameters of citizen engagement by redefining 'who is in charge of what' (authority boundaries) and/or 'who does what' (task boundaries). Second, we observed employees reconstructing the boundaries between such

competing orientations and the overarching goals against which these were subordinated—either depoliticizing their alignment and neutralizing opposition by highlighting their complementary nature under a shared, overarching objective, or, alternatively, (re)politicizing this broader policy imperative and, as a result, challenging the extent to which colleagues either neglected citizens' voices or accepted a financial deficit. By negotiating boundaries on these different levels, employees gradually shaped how concrete attempts at citizen engagement materialized and, in the processes, potentially reconstructed the political context in which their daily work was embedded.

4.8 DISCUSSION

In this article, we have approached citizen engagement as a contentious organizational process. While resonating with earlier studies that highlight participatory efforts' contingencies on established management practices (Croft et al., 2016; Pedersen & Johannsen, 2016) and professional jurisdictions (El Enany et al., 2013), we contribute to the literature in at least two ways.

First, we have introduced a processual perspective for investigating the dynamics of citizen engagement that explicitly accounts for the emergent and contested nature of participatory efforts. Some scholars have provided a temporal perspective on the emergence of different participatory roles (El Enany et al., 2013), but only indirectly touched on the competing rationales for engagement that may coexist within a single organization. Others have addressed the competing rationales for citizen engagement, but failed to empirically or theoretically explore how such rationales are dealt with as participatory processes unfold. Bovaird's (2007) study, for instance, shows the relevance of such an analysis by demonstrating that professionals tend to prefer citizens in a more operational, service-delivery role while citizens themselves prefer a more strategic governance role. Similarly, Pedersen and Johannsen (2016) show that managers are generally more negative about participatory practices than front-line workers—particularly in more hierarchically structured organizations. Accordingly, while extant literature tends to pinpoint the democratic or instrumental nature of a particular participatory programme or an individual actors' approach, our study adds to this line of research by considering how such disparate positions

and orientations interact and, in the process, shape the character of citizen engagement. By demonstrating how organizational actors actively balance competing 'democratic' and 'instrumental' rationales, and defend (or challenge) the particular balance that is struck by themselves (or others), our study helps explain how actors negotiate different boundaries (Hirschhorn & Gilmore, 1992; Lamont & Molnár, 2002) and competing rationales (Bovaird, 2007; Fotaki, 2011) for engaging citizens, and how this in turn shapes the direction in which these processes unfold.

Zooming in on such strategic manoeuvring, and moving to our second theoretical contribution, we contend that organizational politics are at the very heart of participatory practices. Previous studies have already highlighted the importance of viewing issues of power and control as the organizational context in which citizen engagement takes shape (Croft et al., 2016; Fotaki, 2011). Croft and colleagues' (2016) comparison of three participatory processes, for instance, provides valuable insights regarding the key role of the management context in which such processes are embedded. Our study contributes to these studies by capturing the dynamics through which participatory practices are negotiated and constituted over time. By investigating these dynamics, we have shown that citizen engagement should not be treated as something that takes place in the margins of an organization, at the periphery, or as if 'internal' organizational politics constitute its 'external' context. In that vein, our attention is drawn to two ways in which organizational politics form more than a mere 'context' and in which the active getting/defending/challenging of power and political interests becomes, in fact, an integral part of participatory efforts. First, some orientations to citizen engagement embody a direct critique of established management practices; e.g., attempts to strengthen citizens' voice in decision-making processes inherently challenge established boundaries of authority and compromise the ability of both managers and professionals to be 'in control' of service planning and delivery. As such, quarrels over 'legitimate' forms of citizen engagement cannot be seen as separate from managers' and professionals' broader perspectives—including their own positions and interests—on how care services should be managed.

Second, apart from such direct critiques, participatory efforts also engender more subtle political action as actors make sense of, and practically deal with, competing rationales for engaging citizens. By framing competing viewpoints

as being 'two sides of the same coin', successful depoliticization can neutralize more fundamental critiques to citizen engagement by discursively narrowing the space in which actors can challenge the organization's strategic course (Palonen, 2003). In contrast, politicization can open up such space and explicitly question the alleged 'shared' objectives that guide the balancing of competing orientations. In our case study, initial challenges to the leadership's emphasis on democratic rationales were successfully neutralized through depoliticization. Later, however, opposition by more powerful actors within the organization proved much more efficacious. Doctors effectively politicized the organization's strategic course towards citizen engagement and, as a result, drastically altered the political dynamics within the organization. By investigating the efficacy of actors' (de)politicizing accounts, we reveal the subtle political manoeuvrings that help explain why particular orientations to citizen engagement prove more or less prominent as participatory processes unfold. Theoretically, the rhetorical strategy of depoliticization—by which sharp distinctions in organizational actors' disparate interests are obscured in favour of allegedly shared (but often managerially-defined) objectives—also resonates more broadly with critical studies of, for example, teamwork (e.g., Finn et al., 2010).

Given that our study focused on how employees negotiated the nature of citizen engagement, we have not been able to do justice to the dynamics that emerged from the even more heterogeneous group of citizens that decided (not) to participate in the trajectory. Any reference to a 'community', 'public' or 'group of citizens' that is involved in such processes inherently conceals a tremendous diversity of perspectives, interests and positions (Contandriopoulos et al., 2004; Martin, 2008a). Adding even more perspectives and interests to the equation that are worth considering, such diversity, although beyond the scope of this paper, further increases the complexity of a professional organization's attempts to reconstitute its relationship with citizens. We consider this a fruitful direction for future research.

4.9 CONCLUSION

This article has presented a power-sensitive processual approach to help explain why advocates struggle to deliver on promises of citizen engagement

and why such engagement is vulnerable to being watered down or overpowered by the competing interests and principles that guide actors who organize care services. Although it has been claimed that 'citizens have [...] replaced gods and monarchs as the final source of political authority' (Contandriopoulos et al., 2004, p. 1580), our study highlights such authority's limitations. Ensuring the serious consideration of citizen input requires ongoing efforts to depoliticize the extent to which their engagement compromises other (e.g., professional, logistical or financial) considerations. While the tension between such competing considerations has often been identified in the extant literature (Croft et al., 2016; El Enany et al., 2013; Fotaki, 2011), we illuminate the dynamics through which alternative considerations are either effectively aligned with the pursuit of citizen engagement or, alternatively, through which citizen input is eventually co-opted or undermined.

CHAPTER 5

BARGAINING OVER THE 'WHO'

Who participates
in public participation?
The exclusionary effects
of inclusionary efforts

Abstract – Highlighting public service actors' deliberately tokenistic or self-serving efforts, existing literature has shown that public participation often involves the co-optation of sympathetic citizens. In contrast, our study demonstrates that participatory advocates may discredit and marginalize critical voices despite their own inclusive, democratic ideals. We analyse the entangled legitimacy claims of participating citizens and 'inviting' public service actors, capturing (1) the often-unintended dynamics through which the inclusion of particular participants legitimizes the exclusion of others, while illuminating (2) the tenacious propensity of participatory initiatives to establish 'constructive cooperation' as the norm for participation and, subsequently, to normalize exclusionary practices.

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5.1 INTRODUCTION

Promoted as a reform strategy for public services (Voorberg, Bekkers, & Tummers, 2015), extant literature often portrays public participation as a way of incorporating 'community values into local decision-making processes' (Abelson et al., 2003, p. 243). Just who is meant by 'community', however, often remains ambiguous (Kenny et al., 2015). Within both policy and academic debates, terms like 'the public', 'civil society' and 'community' are often used interchangeably to refer to 'ordinary people' as a category distinct from officials, professionals and other so-called insiders to the healthcare system (Contandriopoulos, 2004; Contandriopoulos et al., 2004). Research into participatory efforts (e.g., Barnes et al., 2003; Martin, 2008a) has examined how the 'public' within public participation is translated into a more demarcated set of participants; i.e., who actually participates?

When investigating how actors negotiate the concrete parameters of a participating 'public', it is particularly interesting to consider the role of critical voices within such processes. Paradoxically, while advocates tend to portray public participation as a welcome democratizing counterpoise to managerial and professional power (Harrison & Mort, 1998; Needham, 2008), research shows that critical voices within participatory initiatives often tend to be marginalized, compromising public participation's potential as a countervailing power (e.g., Barnes et al., 2003). Particularly in the case of 'invited' (i.e., as opposed to 'grassroots') participation that is 'orchestrated by an external agency of some kind, be it state or non-governmental' (Cornwall, 2008, p. 281), public service agencies tend to draw boundaries to delineate whom they consider 'appropriate' participants and what they see as the 'proper' scope of their engagement (Glimmerveen et al., 2018; Kenny et al., 2015). Moreover, citizens themselves may also be unable or unwilling to participate, especially when doubtful about whether their participation actually makes a difference (Abelson et al., 2003;

Cornwall, 2008; Hodge, 2005). As a result, participatory initiatives tend to attract 'archetypally "active" citizens' (Martin, 2008a, p. 50), characterized by a willingness to participate as partners rather than as critical challengers (Croft et al., 2016). Existing studies thus show that public participation initiatives often exclude citizens who take a more antagonistic stance.

For this reason, scholars have thrown doubt on the democratic intentions behind participatory efforts, highlighting instead organizational actors' deliberate co-optation of citizens in order to advance their own positions (e.g., Hodge, 2005; Lee & Romano, 2013). By empirically investigating the entanglement of citizens' and public service actors' efforts to justify who is and who is not involved in a participatory process, we try to move beyond such cynical accounts. As yet, the micro-dynamics that help explain the marginalization of democratic opposition have not received due empirical or theoretical elaboration. By building on a longitudinal, qualitative case study of a professional care provider that solicited local citizen participation for one of its elderly care homes, we demonstrate why—even when their participation is invited from a 'desire to pursue democratic ideals of legitimacy, transparency and accountability' (Abelson et al., 2003, p. 239)—critical citizens still tend to be marginalized. In short, our paper addresses the following question:

How do citizens and public service actors try to establish the legitimacy of their mutual engagement and how does this affect the position of critical voices within public participation practices?

Our paper's main contribution is twofold. First, we provide an empirically grounded analysis of participation's intrinsic dynamics of inclusion and exclusion. Although the question of 'who participates' is often treated as a design choice (e.g., Fung, 2006) or as the deliberate selection of 'appropriate' participants (e.g., El Enany et al., 2013), we illuminate the emergent, often-unintended inclusionary and exclusionary dynamics that shape participant selection over time. This allows us to make a second contribution. Our empirical analysis substantiates our claim that 'exclusion' is part and parcel of participatory efforts: in fact, it is built into its very design. Participatory initiatives tend to normalize the undemocratic lockout of protesters—even when the actors involved deliberately set out to be open to

criticism and opposition. In its critique of citizens' co-optation, extant literature often proposes strategies to achieve more 'real and meaningful' participation (Durose, Richardson, Dickinson, & Williams, 2013, p. 331) and to 'more effectively [...] open opportunities for influence' (Cornwall, 2004, p. 8). Without denying the potential of such strategies, our analysis justifies more fundamental caution regarding the assumption of participatory initiatives' democratic counterpoise potential.

In what follows, we first explore how extant literature approaches the question of 'who participates in public participation'. We then conceptually zoom in on the notion of legitimacy and its pursuance by actors involved in public participation initiatives. Subsequently, we move on to our case study of a professional care provider's attempts to solicit and build on local citizen engagement regarding one of its care homes. In conclusion, we reflect on our findings' implications for making sense of the apparent difficulty to engage with critical citizens.

5.2 MOVING FROM PUBLIC TO PARTICIPANTS

While 'the public', 'the community' and 'civil society' are often treated as singular actors (Brandsen, Trommel, & Verschuere, 2017), public participation always relies on some form of representation or mandate-giving (Contandriopoulos, 2004). Especially when soliciting participation with some degree of 'depth'—i.e., when aiming for more than just a one-off consultation—practitioners inherently face the need to compromise on 'breadth'—i.e., on a participatory trajectory's inclusiveness in terms of who participates (Cornwall, 2008). Scrutinizing how an abstract public is translated into a concrete set of participants allows us to approach public participation 'as a constitutive process in which particular concepts of the public are mobilized, negotiated, and enacted' (Barnes, Newman, & Sullivan, 2004, p. 273) within the governance of local services. Scholars have highlighted the 'political action by individuals who claim to "speak as", "stand for", or "act for" the "public"' (Contandriopoulos, 2004, p. 327), while also demonstrating actors' unequal abilities to define the characteristics of 'legitimate' representation (Barnes et al., 2003). Such research has demonstrated that 'the political efficacy of public participation ultimately rests upon symbolic struggles

to appropriate the intrinsic legitimacy of the public' (Contandriopoulos, 2004, p. 328). To understand such struggles, scholars have emphasized the importance of focusing on the micro-politics through which various actors operationalize abstract notions of a public (e.g., Barnes et al., 2003, p. 396). Nonetheless, and for at least two reasons, extant literature is still limited in its ability to empirically and theoretically account for who participates and who is excluded within public participation efforts.

To begin, much scholarly work on public participation retains a rather functionalist approach, largely ignoring the political contingencies of legitimate representation. A common approach within the literature treats the criteria for legitimate participation as a function of why citizens are invited to participate. Take, for example, Fung's insightful and influential overview of public participation's disparate manifestations (Fung, 2006, 2015), presenting a 'menu of design choices' (Fung, 2015, p. 513) in which 'particular designs are suited to specific objectives' (Fung, 2006, p. 74). In a similar vein, Marent et al. (2015, p. 836) delineate how 'different types of lay people (who) can become relevant on different levels, for different organizational programs (what) and thus facilitate different functions (why)'. Within such approaches, the legitimacy of a particular set of participants flows from the participatory effort's particular purpose. In practice, however, the different rationales with which citizens are engaged tend to be more ambiguous and contested than the notion of 'design choices' suggests—even among actors within a single participatory initiative (Cornwall, 2008; Glimmerveen et al., 2018). In sum, and notwithstanding the usefulness of such taxonomies for categorizing disparate participatory practices, these approaches present oversimplified accounts of how 'a public' is translated into 'participants'—i.e., by portraying this as a technical choice or managerial decree and, in doing so, obscuring the socio-political dynamics through which citizens are gradually included or excluded as 'representative participants'.

Second, scholars that do take a more politically sensitive approach tend to ignore how a concrete set of participants is interactively constructed and legitimized between the disparate actors involved in public participation efforts. Such interactive dynamics, we contend, are key to understanding the often-marginal position of critical voices within such efforts. By investigating the use of inclusive and exclusive discourses within public participation campaigns

(e.g., Contandriopoulos et al., 2004; Lancaster, Seear, Treloar, & Ritter, 2017; Martin, 2008a), scholars have demonstrated the discursive accomplishment and contestation of legitimate representation—e.g., by highlighting the 'symbolic struggles for the objectification of a particular definition of "the public"' (Contandriopoulos et al., 2004, p. 1591) as community organizations try to exert influence over governance decisions. However, these studies lack the empirical grounding required to account for the real-time micro-dynamics through which different actors' pursuits of legitimacy interact over time. One notable exception from the field of service user involvement includes El Enany et al.'s (2013) processual account of how some users are (self-)selected and gradually shaped as 'expert participants' while others are left uninvolved. By providing valuable insights into the interconnectedness of the disparate views and actions of those involved, their study demonstrates some of the interactive processes that gradually shape the nature of user participation. In the current article, we take their approach one step further. In addition to investigating the interactions between citizens and public service employees, we also investigate how these, in turn, are affected by actors' attempts to justify their mutual involvement within their own respective constituencies (respectively within the larger 'community' and 'organization'). By investigating how these various pursuits of legitimacy interact and co-evolve over time, we are able to shed new light on an often-stated but under-theorized challenge faced by public service agencies: how to meaningfully engage with critical voices when soliciting citizen participation.

5.3 PURSUING LEGITIMACY

Extending beyond our current focus on public participation, the concept of legitimacy has been applied to a broad range of empirical phenomena and theoretical domains (Suddaby, Bitektine, & Haack, 2017). In his seminal review article, Suchman defines legitimacy as 'a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions' (Suchman, 1995, p. 574). Conceptually, legitimacy is closely linked to power, often being rendered the 'recognition of the right to govern' (Courpasson, 2000, p. 143). As such, we see it as a fruitful conceptual lens for investigating public participation

processes, i.e., processes in which actors try to substantiate their own intent to serve the public (Contandriopoulos et al., 2004) while simultaneously struggling over who is allowed to define and voice this public's interest (Barnes et al., 2003).

Traditionally, legitimacy has been conceptualized as a characteristic of a particular actor (e.g., of an organization, a team, a group, etc.), indicating how well it meets its external environment's normative expectations (Suddaby et al., 2017). While still informing most scholarship on legitimacy, this view has been criticized for being overly essentialist as it treats legitimacy 'as a highly abstract-independent variable to explain other organizational outcomes rather than [studying it] as an empirical phenomenon in its own right' (Suddaby et al., 2017, p. 458). In contrast, other strands of research have approached legitimacy 'as a communicative process co-constructed in acts of meaning negotiation' (Suddaby et al., 2017, p. 458)—taking place among multiple actors with disparate positions, perspectives and interests (e.g., Zietsma & Lawrence, 2010). Within such processes it has been argued that legitimacy ultimately lies 'in the eye of the beholder', constituted within individual actors' 'judgment of the appropriateness of an organizational product, practice, or characteristic' (Suddaby et al., 2017, p. 463).

Following this latter perspective, we focus our investigations on how participants' various legitimacy claims and judgements interact. Our approach to legitimacy as a subjective perception makes it possible to account for the ambiguity and heterogeneity of actors' perspectives (Suddaby et al., 2017). Scholars have already demonstrated that 'legitimacy itself may become a source of contestation' (Drori & Honig, 2013, p. 368)—e.g., when the desirability of a particular form of public participation becomes contested among the employees of a single organization (Glimmerveen et al., 2018) or among citizens who are invited to participate (van Eijk & Steen, 2014). In a similar vein, public service actors' attempts to meet the expectations of relevant 'external' stakeholders might be at odds with the various 'internal' objectives that people within their organization consider worth pursuing (Brandsen & Pestoff, 2006; Drori & Honig, 2013). In order to account for the dynamic relationship between such interlocking legitimacy pursuits—both 'externally' and 'internally'—we must 'study how legitimacy is produced, defined, and finally reified, at different organizational sites' (Suddaby et al., 2017, p. 470). Doing so enables us to scrutinize how notions

of 'legitimate participants' are interactively carved out among the disparate actors involved within public participation efforts.

Building on the above, we distinguish three key areas for investigating legitimacy claims and judgements within the field of public participation: (1) public service agencies' claims to serve the public interest (Abelson et al., 2003; Fung, 2006, 2015; Hodge, 2005; Martin, 2012), (2) participating citizens' claims to represent a given constituency (Barnes et al., 2003; Contandriopoulos, 2004; El Enany et al., 2013), and (3) the relationship and interaction between, on the one hand, public service agencies' pursuit of legitimacy among citizens and, on the other hand, other objectives pursued within these organizations (Brandsen & Pestoff, 2006; Drori & Honig, 2013; Glimmerveen et al., 2018). Whereas extant research has investigated these three areas in isolation, we set out to generate a better understanding of their interconnectedness within processes of public participation. As a result, we are better able to untangle the intricate relationships between the multiple legitimacy pursuits that take place both within and between groups of citizens and public service actors.

Moving on, we now investigate the interlocking pursuits of legitimacy within our empirical case study of a professional care provider's attempts to solicit and build on local citizens' engagement around one of its care homes. Our analysis reveals the interactions between attempts at (1) deepening participation by creating a coalition of the willing—i.e., reinforcing a norm of constructive partnership that legitimizes the (self-)exclusion of more critical citizens—and (2) broadening participation—i.e., as actors coordinate their involvement within the partnership with their putative constituencies. Furthermore, our findings demonstrate that both dynamics can contribute to the 'legitimate' sidelining of critical citizens. While we do acknowledge the frequently proposed possibility that actors may deliberately marginalize critics in order to advance their own personal or organizational interests (Hodge, 2005; Lee & Romano, 2013), our study helps explain the difficulty of engaging with more antagonistic voices even when actors pursue participation with so-called 'genuine' or 'authentic' motives (Abelson et al., 2003; Osborne & Strokosch, 2013). Finally, our findings shed new light on the dynamics through which an abstract public is translated into a concrete set of participants within provider-led, 'invited' participatory spaces while also allowing us to reflect on how such 'invited' spaces may relate to the citizen-led 'grassroots'

spaces in which citizens gather and deliberate amongst themselves.

5.4 METHODOLOGY

Empirically, our investigations focus on public-participation efforts within the field of long-term care in the Netherlands. Especially in the past decade, the Dutch national government has emphasized both the desirability and inevitability of a more active role for citizens within the governance and delivery of care services. On the one hand, calls to stimulate public participation are presented as a way to empower citizens and counter paternalism within local service governance (Van De Bovenkamp & De Bont, 2016). At the same time, such calls have been associated with concerns about rising public expenses. The Dutch care system is known for its broadly-defined eligibility criteria for an extensive range of publicly funded services (Kroneman et al., 2016). Public spending on long-term care is growing faster than any other type of care (OECD, 2017). Against this background, considerable policy debate has ensued over what constitutes an 'appropriate' balance between public and private responsibilities in long-term care (e.g., Sociaal-Economische Raad, 2012). While care services in the Netherlands are mostly publicly funded and regulated, they are often provided by private non-profit organizations. Facing calls for public participation, these private provider organizations are increasingly expected to engage with local citizens as they design and deliver their services.

This study builds on an ethnographic case study of CareOrg (a pseudonym), a private-but-publicly-funded professional care provider, as it solicited the participation of local citizens around its elderly care home in Carville (a pseudonym), a rural town in the Netherlands. Ethnography 'combines an orientation towards subjective experience and individual agency in everyday life with sensitivity to the broader social settings and historical and institutional dynamics in which these emerge or are embedded' (Ybema, Yanow, Wels, & Kamsteeg, 2009, p. 7; also see Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2012). Capable of capturing how such 'institutional dynamics are created at multiple local sites' (Suddaby et al., 2017, p. 470), ethnography is particularly well-suited for investigating actors' dispersed-but-interconnected pursuits of legitimacy (Suddaby et al., 2017). Our two-and-a-half-year investigation provided us with the empirical groundwork necessary for studying negotiations over who constituted an 'appropriate' participant

and who did not, subsequently revealing those mundane micro-dynamics that generally remain concealed when applying other methodological strategies (e.g., comparative case studies, interview or survey research, etc.).

Our case study makes sense of the processes through which employees and citizens explored the feasibility of keeping the care home open until its scheduled replacement by smaller-scale facilities several years later. In order to continue daily operations, the organization was forced to rely on the efforts of an increasing number of volunteers. Importantly—and in an effort to ensure that decisions on the future of local services were not only made in the boardroom—CareOrg's director emphasized the importance of involving local citizens on decisions that potentially affected them. Exacerbating the urgency of the situation, CareOrg faced an increasingly pronounced incentive to contain costs due to stricter eligibility criteria for public funding, which had led to empty rooms in the home and a looming financial deficit. This created a context in which the exact scope and objectives of public participation (i.e., pursuing inclusive participatory governance versus cost-containment) remained contested throughout the trajectory. The rise and eventual fall of the efforts to safeguard the care home's continuity are described in more detail elsewhere (see Glimmerveen et al., 2018; Glimmerveen, Ybema, & Nies, 2019). This paper builds on our empirical investigations of employees' attempts to involve a group of participants that could 'reasonably be considered to constitute a public engaged in the process' (Martin, 2012, p. 1852), and, in turn, of citizens' attempts to legitimize their abilities to indeed represent this public.

Although our empirical context differs from, for example, government-led public-participation programmes or efforts initiated by citizens themselves, we believe that our case findings' relevance extends across such empirical contexts. By presenting an approach for theoretically and empirically investigating the interconnected pursuits of legitimacy by citizens and public service actors, our study provides a fuller understanding of the broadly-identified challenge of engaging with critical voices in public participation efforts (e.g., Barnes et al., 2003; Cornwall, 2008).

Empirically, we mainly focus on a participatory space that emerged as a key site on which CareOrg employees and Carville citizens negotiated their involvement. By scrutinizing how this platform's composition evolved over time

and examining how both employees, citizen participants and non-participating citizens evaluated and/or legitimized their respective positions, we were able to investigate the interactive and contested constructions of 'appropriate' participation and representation. Moreover, we both followed how employees and participating citizens coordinated their involvement on this platform with their respective constituencies and investigated how this affected the perceived legitimacy of individual participants and the trajectory in which they participated. In particular, we drew on three sources of data: (1) observations of the various meetings attended by both employees and citizens, (2) observations of internal CareOrg project meetings and (3) interviews and conversations with both employees and citizens. Combining interviews with observations of in-situ interactions allowed us to move beyond participants' post-hoc justifications of their behaviour, instead witnessing in real time how they implicitly and explicitly drew on, evaluated and promoted particular interpretations of 'the public' and its representation. Table 5.1 provides an overview of the data on which this study is based.

5.4.1 Data analysis

The question of 'who participates', and the various interconnected pursuits of legitimacy underpinning this process, emerged as a key theme in our analysis. While an earlier analysis of our dataset revealed that actors dealt with competing (democratic vs. instrumental) notions of the purpose of public participation (see Glimmerveen et al., 2018), it did not scrutinize whose involvement was or was not considered appropriate. In order to explore how 'legitimate' categories of participants were gradually carved out, we first looked to the literature to study how such demarcation or selection of participants was treated in extant research on public participation, while also drawing on more conceptual literature on legitimacy. Next, we revisited our earlier analysis of the data in order to identify and code those instances in which actors were included or excluded from the newly erected participatory platforms, as well as the instances in which such inclusion or exclusion was evaluated and/or legitimized by the people involved (resulting in codes like 'self-exclusion', 'questioning representativeness' and 'preventing partisan dynamics'). Moreover, we searched for instances in which both citizens and employees scrutinized the legitimacy of these participatory spaces and the

Table 5.1 Overview of empirical material

DATA SOURCES	RESULTING DATA
45 meetings observed (mostly audio-recorded) 15 internal CareOrg meetings: • 13 with the Carville project team • 1 with the logistics department • 1 policy staff member's 'good-bye party' 30 meetings with local citizens: • 4 open-to-all public meetings • 18 citizen/employee working-group meetings • 1 with civil-society organizations • 3 with both citizens and professional third parties • 4 with residents' family and/or volunteers	38 hours of audio recording (selectively transcribed); field notes*
16 audio-recorded interviews and conversations 13 individual interviews and 3 group interviews (2-4 people): • 4 interviews with 3 different citizens • 12 interviews with 9 different employees, including: o 1 social worker (1 interview) o 3 policy advisors (8 interviews) o 3 local and regional managers (3 interviews) o 2 central-management team members (4 interviews)	9 hours of audio recording (fully transcribed); field notes*
38 days on site (ranging from 4-hour visits to overnight stays) • Numerous informal conversations, mainly before and after meetings • Extensive 'hanging out' before and after meetings, observing employees' everyday work	Extensive field notes*
2 audio-recorded reflection sessions with CareOrg employees • 1 with 2 members of the central management team • 1 with 4 employees in both leadership and advisory roles, from central, regional and local offices.	Almost 3 hours of audio recording (selectively transcribed)*

* Transcripts and notes together comprised a total of 154,338 words

people acting in them, as well as their strategies to enhance this legitimacy (e.g., 'creating infrastructure for accountability', 'enhancing organizational support base', 'promoting partnership orientation in town').

Eventually, our analysis led us to identify two dominant dynamics that characterized actors' legitimacy pursuits as they attempted to deepen and broaden the character of participation within their initiative. In what follows, we describe these findings in more detail.

5.5 FINDINGS

Although the issue often remained under the surface, the question of 'who participates' emerged as a common thread throughout our case study. Making abstract references to both 'the town' and 'the community' as if they were a relatively singular actor, both CareOrg employees and citizens regularly commented on the role, needs and actions of 'the community'. During both internal CareOrg meetings and meetings with citizens, CareOrg employees emphasized that 'what the town wants is incredibly important to everything that we do' (regional manager, meeting transcript):

> I see serving the community as a necessity. [...] If the community doesn't see the care home as theirs [...] then is its existence legitimate? I question that.
>
> (General director, interview transcript)

When operationalized, however, abstract references to the community turned out to be 'no more than a cover term for a heterogeneous collection of [actors]' (Brandsen et al., 2017, p. 677). This became particularly apparent when local citizens were invited to the first open-to-all meeting to discuss the care home's situation. By hosting the meeting at a community hall that belonged to a local church—a venue right in the middle of town—CareOrg employees wanted to symbolize how the challenges faced by the care home did not only affect their organization, but were of key concern to the local community. Just days before the meeting was to commence, however, they found out that a considerable number of the town's inhabitants belonged to a different congregation, causing CareOrg employees to worry that this group would refuse to attend and making

them decide to organize the meeting in their own care home after all (meeting notes). Later in the process, after citizens had already taken a proverbial seat at the table, notions of 'the community' remained diffuse and unclear. For instance, participating citizens sometimes became frustrated when an employee stated that they first needed to 'consult the people in town', replying that they were 'here on behalf of the town; we represent them, we have that authority!' (local citizen, meeting notes). In sum, both citizens and employees continued to struggle with the need to translate abstract notions of 'town' and 'community' into actual categories of participating citizens.

To further elaborate on how the community was 'constituted as actors' (Barnes et al., 2003, p. 396), we now investigate citizens' inclusion and exclusion from the joint group—a platform that was established as the key locus of public participation. During the joint group's monthly meetings, employees and citizens discussed the facility's situation and negotiated their mutual involvement within it. Analysing how this platform emerged and developed over time, we now explore (1) how employees and participating citizens tried to deepen participation by creating a coalition of the willing, which differentiated 'appropriate' participants from 'marginal' outsiders, and (2) how they tried to broaden participation by investing in citizen participants' alignment and coordination with their alleged constituencies.

5.5.1 Deepening participation: fostering a partnership by excluding critics

Resulting in the creation of a constructive coalition that progressively reinforced the legitimacy of the initiative, we identify three mutually reinforcing dynamics through which actors differentiated between 'appropriate' participants and legitimately excludable citizens: (1) citizens' self-exclusion, i.e., their refusal to take part in a trajectory they considered illegitimate, (2) citizen participants' simultaneous disqualification of critical outsiders and legitimization of their own positions and (3) CareOrg employees' disqualification of critical outsiders and their propensity to endorse cooperative citizens. Interestingly, we are able to show how these dynamics sanctioned the marginalization of critical voices without necessarily challenging the legitimacy of the trajectory—at least in the eyes of the participants themselves. On the contrary, the exclusion of critics allowed citizens and employees to reinforce—at least within the confinements of

the joint group—their mutual recognition of themselves as legitimate actors in addressing the care home's situation.

Citizens' self-exclusion First, and perhaps most obviously, the voluntary nature of citizen participation in the joint group implied that critical citizens who questioned the trajectory's legitimacy did not sign up to participate. Such self-exclusion was observed when, for instance, during an open-to-all town meeting hosted by CareOrg, the discussion surrounding the formation of the joint group included several citizens voicing their antagonism and suspicion of CareOrg's motives ('It's cheaper for them to involve us than to close the home entirely' – local citizen, meeting notes) and refusing to join the group:

> I won't join if CareOrg is in charge. Such an initiative should be led by citizens, not by an external commercial actor.
>
> (Local citizen, meeting notes)

Citizens' self-exclusion continued to play a role as the trajectory progressed. To deliberate on the future of local care services amongst themselves, a citizen-only group was established as an alternative to the CareOrg-initiated joint group. When most members of the citizen-only group eventually became inclined to collaborate with CareOrg, two of the group members who had initially criticized such collaboration stopped attending the meetings. Soon after, a mutual decision was made to merge the citizen-only group and the CareOrg-initiated joint group. On the whole, citizens' gradual inclinations toward constructive collaboration with CareOrg went hand-in-hand with the self-exclusion of those who rejected CareOrg as a legitimate partner. As such, and inherent to all initiatives reliant on participants' self-selection (El Enany et al., 2013; Fung, 2006), this meant that participant selection was increasingly skewed toward a more partnership-oriented (versus a more antagonistic) group of citizens. Nonetheless, participating citizens and employees did not seem to view this as a fundamental challenge to the legitimacy of the trajectory since, as we will discuss now, both tended to discredit the legitimacy of the critical voices that had been excluded.

Citizen participants' disqualification of critical outsiders As a second dynamic, we observed citizen participants within the joint group talk about critical non-participating citizens in a derogatory way while sanctioning a more positive

attitude as the norm for appropriate participation. The critical townsman quoted above, who had questioned CareOrg for its commercial motives, was described by others as someone who himself wanted to 'be the boss' (local citizen, interview transcript). Similarly, after a joint-group participant—unhappy with how the group was functioning—quit the group, she was delegitimized by a fellow citizen who described her as someone who 'gabbed a lot without having much to say' (local citizen, interview transcript). More generally, critical citizens were referred to as 'the raging elderly' (local citizen, interview transcript). Amongst themselves, citizen participants would sometimes reprimand one another for being overly critical or uncooperative—e.g., by urging others to 'have a more positive attitude [and] [...] stop acting so dependent' (local citizen, meeting transcript). Such responses enforced a collaborative, partnership-oriented attitude as the norm for legitimate participation and marked a more antagonistic position as inappropriate. Simultaneously, participating citizens' derogatory portrayal of critical outsiders boosted their own legitimacy as spokespeople for the local community and thus valuable partners within the trajectory.

CareOrg employees' disqualification of critical outsiders Third, we observed employees' similarly disapproving responses to markedly critical citizens. On the one hand, employees sometimes attempted to keep such critics 'on board'—e.g., by immediately getting in touch with a prominent townsperson in response to rumours that he had been dissatisfied with CareOrg's approach (meeting notes). On the other hand, and at least as frequently, we observed employees' disqualification of these same critical citizens. For example, because of its members' outspoken suspicion of CareOrg's initial invitation to engage with the care home, CareOrg employees criticized Carville Interest Group, a local civic organization:

> This group is still a bit backward-thinking, they think we're a large corporation playing games with them. [...] They're really uncooperative, really critical [...].They're constantly struggling with their own constituency. Carville Interest Group doesn't represent the town's interests!
>
> (Policy advisor, meeting transcript)

When faced with antagonism from local stakeholders, employees talked about the need for an 'incubation period' in which these actors would be 'talked through everything time and again' (policy advisor, meeting transcript) as a way of essentially stimulating them to become more collaborative partners:

> It's in their interest, though they don't see it that way. But they're lagging behind in terms of information; they don't really know why we're doing all this. We need to invest in that [...] and work through this phase.
>
> (Policy advisor, meeting transcript)

These three dynamics—i.e., critics' exclusion by either (1) themselves (2) other citizen participants or (3) CareOrg employees—were entangled. They reinforced one another in their propensities to marginalize critical voices within the participatory process. Illustrative of such entanglement was citizen participants' changing positionings within the joint group as the trajectory unfolded. Although somewhat reserved throughout the initial meetings, these same citizen participants became increasingly proactive and cooperative as the meetings ensued. At the same time, employees who had at first both criticized citizens' initial hesitations and lamented their waiting 'at the sidelines' (conversation notes) later explicitly praised them for 'increasingly adopting their role' (conversation notes). As a result, citizens' cooperative attitude not only effectively contributed to both the legitimacy of the joint trajectory and the recognition of CareOrg as a legitimate partner, it also boosted citizens' own legitimacy among employees. Moreover, after Carville Interest Group gained new leadership and dropped their hostile approach to CareOrg—even, eventually, explicitly praising their handling of the care home's situation—CareOrg employees, in turn, referred to the new board members as a 'gift from heaven' (conversation notes) and began to refer to the local organization as a valuable partner. Again, this illustrates the reciprocal nature of actors' recognition of one another's legitimacy (and, implicitly, of excluded citizens' ineptitude as collaborative partners in the process).

In sum, and catalysed by the (self-)exclusion of critical citizens who had been framed as unfit to participate, CareOrg employees and 'appropriate' citizen participants increasingly granted each other their sought-after legitimacy as 'good partners' in their joint efforts to deal with the care home's situation. In the

eyes of those involved as 'partners', this reinforced the validity of their emerging local coalition.

5.5.2 Broadening participation: reconnecting participants and constituencies

So far, we have discussed the development of mutual recognition within the confinements of the joint group. At the same time, how to align this group to the wider constituencies of citizens and employees remained a point of concern among the actors involved. We now discuss how these citizens and employees tried to align their involvement within the joint group with (1) other colleagues within CareOrg and (2) the 'larger community'. While in practice further compromising the group's potential as a countervailing power, such cross-boundary alignment was often pursued to enhance both the representativeness and the organizational impact of the initiative.

Negotiating the legitimacy of public participation among colleagues

Throughout the trajectory, the scope of citizen participation remained contested among CareOrg colleagues (also see Glimmerveen et al., 2018). Some of them favoured a more instrumental approach—i.e., engaging citizens as operational volunteers in pursuit of cost-containment—and some senior managers were even reported to fundamentally question the initiative's legitimacy, believing that the organization was 'crazy for doing what we are doing' (conversation notes). Facing such opposition, a staff member who was specifically assigned to 'create a support base [for public participation] within the organization' (interview transcript) admitted she might have been moving too fast while her colleagues lagged behind (meeting notes). Clearly, the legitimacy of public participation as a guiding principle within local service governance remained contentious.

Such inconsistent internal support limited the space available for engaging with critical voices. Instead of engaging with critical citizens' concerns, internal advocates of public participation faced the challenge of convincing more sceptical colleagues who were concerned with other organizational interests. For example, in order to monitor whether public participation was 'paying off' for CareOrg, joint-group meetings would start by collectively reviewing a spreadsheet that tracked both the target and the current number of operational volunteers for a range of activities. Explaining his desire for such clear overviews and 'SMART objectives', a logistics manager stated:

> When do you say: we can't continue like this, we need to close the facilities? [...] We need to be more specific. [...] I don't think we put enough pressure on the people in town [...] To what extent do these participants spread the word that we really need volunteers for the care home?
>
> (Logistics manager, interview transcript)

The imperative to 'deliver' a sufficient number of volunteers allowed supporters of public participation less room for dealing with citizens who did not already show a degree of willingness to constructively cooperate. Especially since the developments in Carville were considered an important pilot project for other CareOrg locations facing a similar situation, there was considerable pressure to demonstrate convincing results on operational targets to 'colleagues that look at this from a financial perspective and question why we're doing this—purely by looking at a spreadsheet' (general director, interview transcript). Such pressure reinforced a more instrumental approach to participation.

Negotiating the legitimacy of public participation among citizens Within the local community, citizen participants faced a similar problem vis-à-vis their own constituency. Looking for ways to deal with the diffuse nature of 'the community', both citizens and employees regularly stressed the importance of developing some form of civic infrastructure, i.e., the need to 'align the muddle of disparate initiatives in town [...], to get everyone on the same page' (local citizen, meeting transcript). One CareOrg staff member actively stimulated citizens to 'form a proper mouthpiece as discussion partners within this trajectory and organize themselves within all the plans being made' (policy advisor, meeting notes). About halfway through our fieldwork, a group of local citizens took the initiative to form a volunteer cooperative. This cooperative would coordinate the various grassroots initiatives in town and connect partisan factions—'really belonging to all people in town' (local citizen, interview transcript)—while providing an infrastructure to 'gather input from the rest of town' (policy advisor, meeting notes) when engaging in local governance issues. At least in part, this citizen-led infrastructure was established to enhance the legitimacy of public participation by actively including a broad constituency; in other words, it supported the alignment of those actively

participating and those who claimed to be represented by such participants.

Nevertheless, establishing such citizen-led infrastructures did not seem to contribute to the inclusion of more critical voices within participatory processes. Instead, it contributed to the promotion of a favourable attitude toward CareOrg among a broader group of citizens. The newly established citizen-led spaces ended up being dominated by those citizens who had already constructively collaborated with CareOrg. The aforementioned citizen-only group, established as an alternative to the CareOrg-initiated joint group, constitutes an illustrative case in point. Referring to this citizen-led platform as 'the separatist group', two women who participated in the joint group purposively signed up for the citizen-only group in an attempt to 'reel them back in' (local citizen, interview transcript). As the two groups later merged, they eventually succeeded in their efforts. In a similar vein, another prominent member of the joint group, who had been a driving force behind the volunteer cooperative, consistently referred to CareOrg as a valuable partner and made sure a local CareOrg employee—also an inhabitant of Carville—was granted a central position within the cooperative. Furthermore, the open-to-all town meetings showed a similar dynamic: citizens' initial critique and suspicion in the meetings organized by CareOrg later evolved into a consistent portrayal of CareOrg as a valuable partner in the meetings organized and hosted by Carville Interest Group (meeting notes). Instead of enhancing the trajectory's inclusiveness of more critical voices, the various, increasingly self-organized citizen groups effectively promoted the legitimacy of partnering with CareOrg.

While this 'constructive bias' within citizen-led spaces was not the direct result of a deliberate attempt to co-opt citizens and boost the legitimacy of the trajectory, employees did engage in more-explicit efforts to leverage connections between citizen participants and their fellow citizens in order to create a more favourable public opinion. This became particularly apparent when employees explicitly requested citizen members to act as ambassadors and advocates for the joint initiative. Having identified a level of 'distortion' in how townspeople discussed CareOrg's motives for inviting public participation, a local manager asked citizen members whether it would be possible to 'get this distortion out of the way' (meeting transcript). In the same vein, when a local weekly newspaper published a critical piece about the process surrounding the care home, a citizen participant volunteered to go and talk to the editors and see if they would agree

to first pass such articles by the group members before sending it to print. Such examples of citizen participants reaching out to other citizens were highly welcomed by CareOrg employees—enabling them to 'extend their network' (local manager, meeting transcript) and link up with actors they would otherwise find hard to reach.

In sum, efforts to broadly strengthen the legitimacy of public participation efforts, both among CareOrg colleagues and among citizens, did not lead to the inclusion of critical voices in the trajectory. In fact, the promotion of the joint trajectory among those colleagues and citizens not directly involved had the opposite effect: critical citizens (and critique in general) were marginalized as the norm of constructive partnership was further promoted.

5.6 DISCUSSION

Our study investigates why critical voices so often remain marginal within public participation—even when participation is pursued for so-called 'genuine' or 'authentic' motives (Abelson et al., 2003; Osborne & Strokosch, 2013). In our investigation, we explored the processes triggered by a professional care provider's attempts to solicit citizen involvement for one of its care facilities. Building on the notion that '[i]t is in the micro-politics of institutional engagement, rather than through officially espoused views or strategies, that the public is constituted as actors' (Barnes et al., 2003, p. 396), we have uncovered how abstract notions of 'community' are interactively translated into a concrete set of participants. In particular, we have highlighted the contentious character of such translations by investigating people's disparate attempts to justify their own positions within the governance of services. By empirically grounding a politically sensitive analysis within the real-time interactions of the actors involved, we are able to move beyond the predominantly functionalist public participation literature, which mainly treats participant selection as a relatively clear-cut 'design choice' (Fung, 2006, p. 70). At the same time, we also provide a rebuttal to somewhat-cynical political accounts that overemphasize public service actors' deliberate co-optation of citizens in order to advance their own interests. Instead, we shed light on the more subtle dynamics through which critical voices get marginalized within participatory processes.

Moving forward, we now reflect on what we see as the two main contributions of our study. First, our study highlights the entanglement of legitimacy claims made by, on the one hand, the public service actors who solicit participation and, on the other hand, the citizens who choose to participate. Both parties seek recognition for their position within the local governance of services. By endorsing each other as legitimate partners and reinforcing a notion of collaborative partnership as the appropriate form of participation, they are able to jointly construct a normative basis for disqualifying and excluding critical citizens without threatening the overall legitimacy of the process. Furthermore, public service employees often face the need to internally advocate for public participation among colleagues in order to convince them that such participation indeed 'pays off'. Pressure to deliver concrete results (e.g., in terms of mobilizing operational volunteers) also limits the space available for engaging with critical voices. Paradoxically, this bias toward constructive participation may be further reinforced when trying to align participant efforts with the concerns of other (potentially less willing or constructive) citizens who are not directly involved. Instead of creating more space for engaging with their potential critique, such alignment may serve to further promote the norm of constructive participation within participants' alleged constituencies. By scrutinizing these dynamics, our study explains why participatory initiatives are easily and inadvertently skewed toward the involvement of citizens who are already willing to constructively cooperate—despite a persistent effort to being open to criticism and opposition.

A focus on these entangled legitimacy pursuits also provides us with an alternative perspective on how actors deal with the trade-offs between the so-called breadth and depth of participatory initiatives. Extant literature points to the inevitable compromises that must be made when (1) pursuing an inclusive set of participants (breadth) and (2) sustaining and strengthening participation throughout the various stages of a given process (depth) (Cornwall, 2008; Fung, 2006). Combining such depth and breadth has been described as 'either virtually impossible to achieve or so cumbersome and time-consuming that everyone begins to lose interest' (Cornwall, 2008, p. 276). Building on our case findings, however, we demonstrate that actors continue to seek legitimacy for their participatory initiatives precisely by simultaneously pursuing breadth and depth. While establishing a coalition of willing participants as a main platform

throughout the participatory process (i.e., while deepening participation), the actors involved may concurrently aim to promote this main platforms' legitimacy by fostering participant alignment vis-à-vis their alleged constituencies (i.e., while broadening participation)—albeit with limited success. Our analysis demonstrates the analytical merits of untangling such interacting pursuits of breadth and depth, helping us explain how a particular selection of participants is demarcated and legitimized.

As a second contribution, our analysis highlights a potential dark side of participatory initiatives: the tenacious propensity to establish 'constructive cooperation' as the norm for legitimate participation. While this propensity may echo the democratic ambitions of citizen-participation advocates, it may equally contribute to the exclusion of those who do not subscribe to this norm—i.e., those unwilling to acknowledge the legitimacy of the agencies soliciting their participation. This tendency resonates with, and may help explain, the historical shift identified by Brandsen, Trommel and Verschuere (2017) from a 'rather adversarial' relationship between civil society and the public sector 'towards a more cooperative relationship' (Brandsen et al., 2017, p. 682). Our analysis elaborates on the micro-dynamics of this development while our findings suggest being cautious of the assumption that citizen participation is always as an effective means of incorporating 'community values into local decision-making processes' (Abelson et al., 2003, p. 243). In fact, our analysis reveals the potential parochialism and coerciveness of establishing a benign culture of participation: its normative cooperation and congeniality tends to shut out opposition and opponents. Even when citizen participation is pursued as a critical, democratizing counterpoise to managerial and professional power (Harrison & Mort, 1998; Needham, 2008), our study demonstrates the ease with which such well-intended democratic ambitions may actually be marginalized in the face of actors' respective pursuits of legitimacy. Participation is only for the willing.

Further substantiating such reason for caution, consider our analysis of the possible alignment between provider-initiated 'invited' spaces and citizen-led 'grassroots' spaces. Scholars have emphasized that connecting such spaces may potentially enhance participants' potency as a countervailing power (Cornwall, 2004; Taylor, 2007), stating that participatory processes 'require both insiders and outsiders, those who choose to enter invited spaces and those who prefer to

operate in their own "popular" [citizen-led] spaces' (Taylor, 2007, p. 311). Being able to move back and forth between invited and citizen-led spaces, they say, can help participants 'gain confidence and skills, develop their arguments and gain from the solidarity and support that being part of a group can offer' (Cornwall, 2008, p. 265). While our analysis partly supports this empowering potential, it also exposes the potential dark sides of forging such connection. Eventually, as witnessed in our case, alignment of these spaces may result in the further discrediting and marginalization of citizens' antagonism or criticism while reinforcing the legitimacy of those already constructively collaborating. Even when aiming for empowerment, promoting the interconnectedness of invited and citizen-led spaces may, in reality, effectively undermine the critical potential of public participation.

Our analysis has demonstrated the exclusionary potential of inclusionary pursuits. When constructive collaboration emerges as the dominant norm for participation, critics and critique may end up being 'legitimately' discarded. To some extent, the relative ease with which such exclusionary dynamics shaped the selection of participants may have been particular to our current case context, i.e., that of a private provider organization pursuing participation around one of its care facilities. In coming to a 'legitimate' group of participants, private actors may have more room to manoeuvre opportunistically than public organizations. Facing the accountability requirements of a representative democracy, a municipality, for example, may be more limited in its ability to 'legitimately' discard its critics. Nevertheless, we believe that the identified mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion may be typical of participatory efforts. In both private and public contexts, inclusionary efforts may separate the willing from the unwilling. While these mechanisms may be manifested differently in public settings (e.g., in determining membership of formal 'community' advisory committees to local governments) and lead to different outcomes (e.g., as mechanisms of representative democracy may indeed have the potential to 'correct' those of public participation), participatory efforts remain inherently exclusionary.

To substantiate this hypothesis, an interesting avenue for future research would be to investigate whether indeed similar mechanisms shape the position of critical voices within government-initiated pursuits of public participation. To what extent, for example, do citizens-as-voters constitute an effective counterpoise

to the marginalization of critique and exclusionism, i.e., to the participation of a select group of citizens-as-participants? Focusing on such government-initiated pursuits, scrutinizing actors' competing (and more or less entangled) legitimacy claims within competing governance regimes may shed new light on micro-level dynamics of the tension between representative and participatory democracy. Throughout this paper, a normative question has been lying just beneath the surface: to what extent should the inclusion of critical voices (always) be pursued? How should we evaluate the 'legitimate' marginalization of such critical voices within public participation efforts? To a certain extent, it seems reasonable to question whether inclusiveness and 'keeping critics on board' should always be a guiding principle. Particularly in cases similar to our study setting—i.e., when actors try to preserve a local care facility that is threatened in its existence due to public budget cuts—one might say it is acceptable to engage only with 'willing' citizens. From a pragmatic perspective, sacrificing some inclusivity and 'breadth' may be acceptable if it means that a particular subsection of 'the community' effectively mobilizes itself around a care facility to prevent its closure. While we do not necessarily reject such reasoning, we do want to caution for its implications for the 'public' character of services. Our case study demonstrated how a public service agency's affiliation with one particular faction of a 'participating community' (in our case, only the willing or only one of two churches in town) may preclude the engagement of those not belonging to this faction. By banking on a 'coalition of the willing' and turning a blind eye to the 'inherent parochialism' (Gittel 2001 in Taylor, 2007, p. 312) of individual civic actors, policy makers and managers do, as a trade-off, accept strong informal barriers for particular citizens to access participatory processes. In doing so, they may promote a narrow interest disguised as public interest. At the very least, actors' critical awareness of and reflection on slippery notions such as 'the public interest' and 'representation' seem an ethical imperative to any attempt at fostering citizen participation.

5.7 CONCLUSION

Moving beyond 'cynical' accounts that overemphasize public service actors' deliberate co-optation of citizens, this paper has generated insights into the more-subtle dynamics that contribute to the difficulty of engaging with critical

voices within public participation efforts. Our identification of both public service actors' and participating citizens' pursuit of recognition as legitimate actors within the local governance of services allowed us to then recognize the propensity to reinforce a norm of constructive partnership when establishing a local coalition of citizens and employees. This norm effectively granted both parties the sought-after legitimacy while diminishing space for engaging with critical voices. The resulting implications suggest that attempts to reconnect participants and their alleged constituencies—even when motivated by a desire to enhance participant responsiveness and representation—might, in practice, actually contribute to citizens' further co-optation.

CHAPTER 6

PARTICIPATION IN CARE INTEGRATION

Citizens as active participants in integrated care:
Challenging the field's dominant paradigms

Abstract – Policy makers, practitioners and academics often claim that care users and other citizens should be 'at the center' of care integration pursuits. Nonetheless, the field of integrated care tends to approach these constituents as passive recipients of professional and managerial efforts. This paper critically reflects on this discrepancy, which, we contend, indicates both a key objective and an ongoing challenge of care integration; i.e., the need to reconcile (1) the professional, organizational and institutional frameworks by which care work is structured with (2) the diversity and diffuseness that is inherent to pursuits of active user and citizen participation. By identifying four organizational tensions that result from this challenge, we raise questions about whose knowledge counts (lay/professional), who is in control (local/central), who participates (inclusion/exclusion) and whose interests matter (civic/organizational). By making explicit what so often remains obscured in the literature, we enable actors to more effectively address these tensions in their pursuits of care integration. In turn, we are able to generate a more realistic outlook on the opportunities, limitations and pitfalls of citizen participation.

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6.1 INTRODUCTION

The field of integrated care has an ambiguous relationship with citizens and communities, i.e., with those whose lives may be affected by how services are organized. Both integrated care policy and literature consistently stress the importance of 'putting the individual at the centre of all interventions' (Leichsenring, 2004, p. 4). Recognizing that care services ought to reflect 'the needs of the local population' (Valentijn, Schepman, Opheij, & Bruijnzeels, 2013, p. 8), scholars and policy makers often call for 'stronger citizen's participation' (Gröne & Garcia-Barbero, 2001, p. 7) in their governance and delivery. Such ambitions have resulted in a vast range of efforts that are often referred to as co-production—an umbrella term for situations in which care users and other citizens 'contribute to the provision of health [or social care] services as partners of professional providers' (Vennik, van de Bovenkamp, Putters, & Grit, 2016, p. 151). For example, co-production is often pursued in partnerships between individual users and professionals (Martin & Finn, 2011), but also among clients' family members in nursing homes (Haesler, Bauer, & Nay, 2007) or in local rural communities (Kenny et al., 2015; Munoz, 2013). While co-production can encompass collaboration within the actual delivery of care, it can also entail more 'upstream' participation of users and citizens; i.e., as they co-design services together with professionals, managers or policy makers, and take part in 'identify[ing] the kinds of problems to which a service responds, rather than just giving people a say in the answers to pre-defined problems' (Bradwell & Marr, 2008, p. 18). Despite this emphasis on their participation, however, these same 'individuals', 'local populations' and 'citizens' tend to remain remarkably marginal within the dominant frameworks and models that shape our thinking about integrated care, whether implicitly or explicitly positioned as passive recipients of professional or managerial efforts at integration. By continuing to be dominated by established institutional, organizational and professional paradigms—each

with their own assumptions regarding who is 'in charge' of integrating services—integrated care has arguably become 'too much [of] a professionals' concept' (Nies, 2014, p. 1), being pursued for citizens while insufficiently acknowledging the potential contribution made by citizens.

In this paper, we zoom in on how pursuits of citizen participation challenge established conceptualizations of integrated care. We particularly focus on the organizational tensions and ambiguities that we consider intrinsic to all pursuits of participation. This allows us to move beyond simplified claims that either place users and citizens 'in the driver's seat' or that, alternatively, treat them as mere targets of integration. By reflecting on these organizational tensions, we expose the power dynamics that often remain implicit within integrated care literature: to what extent are users and other citizens able to actually influence the outcomes of service integration? Our argument is inspired by our own research at the intersection of participation and care integration (Glimmerveen et al., 2018). In our studies, we consistently witnessed policy makers, managers, professionals and citizens navigating multiple organizational tensions as they faced disparate positions, perspectives and interests within and between groups of actors. In this article, we connect these observations to a broader collection of studies on user and citizen participation. Building on this literature, we demonstrate how participation may catalyze as well as complicate pursuits of integration, as it challenges established divisions of roles and responsibilities on both individual and collective levels of service governance and delivery.

While it is surely not our aim to comprehensively cover extant literature across these different levels of integration, we do want to highlight a shared challenge that underlies such diverse efforts; namely, the need to reconcile (a) the diversity of citizens' concerns and their voluntary involvement—which is often 'not institutionally, vocationally nor financially bound' and therefore 'difficult to control and to steer' (Gobet & Emilsson, 2013, p. 129)—with (b) the professional, organizational and institutional frameworks on which practitioners, managers and policy makers draw when structuring their work. Put differently: how do we accommodate the diversity and diffuseness of citizens' 'life-worlds' while still relying on the systems that support us in the organization of high-quality, equitable and cost-efficient services? As we will elaborate on in this paper, this crucial challenge too often remains implicit within discussions of integrated care,

obscuring a number of key tensions that need to be dealt with when citizens become active participants in care integration. In contrast, our analysis places these tensions front and center by conceptually and practically exploring how they challenge our way of thinking about citizen positions in co-designing and co-producing integrated care.

Although triggered by our own empirical encounters, our argument rests on a conceptual review (Kennedy, 2007) in which we connect the literature on care integration and citizen participation. Instead of doing a systematic review—which others have done before us (see, e.g., Armitage, Suter, Oelke and Adair (2009), Macadam (2008) and Ouwens, Wollersheim, Hermens, Hulscher and Grol (2005) on integrated care; or Conklin, Morris and Nolte (2015) and Voorberg, Bekkers and Tummers (2015) on citizen participation)—a conceptual review allows us to more flexibly capture the intricate dilemmas at the intersection of participation and integration. As a starting point for our review, we made a selection of the International Journal of Integrated Care's most-cited articles (e.g., Gröne & Garcia-Barbero, 2001; Kodner & Spreeuwenberg, 2002; Leichsenring, 2004; Valentijn et al., 2013), indicating the degree to which these have impacted contemporary thinking on integrated care. Focusing on these publications, we first analyze scholars' explicit and implicit positioning of citizens. Then, we supplement with and compare this literature to studies that explicitly focus on user and citizen participation at various levels of service organization. By combining these literatures, we are then able to identify four key organizational tensions that become increasingly salient when citizens adopt a more prominent role in care integration pursuits; i.e., those pertaining to dilemmas involving (1) whose knowledge counts (lay/professional), (2) how power is distributed (local/central), (3) who participates (inclusion/exclusion) and (4) whose interests prevail (organizational/civic). While often remaining implicit in extant literature and in instances in which care is integrated for citizens, we contend that making these tensions explicit provides a more realistic outlook on the opportunities, limitations and pitfalls of citizen participation in care integration. By zooming in on how these tensions are addressed, we are able to highlight people's underlying assumptions regarding who is in charge of and responsible for care integration. Accordingly, we contend that these assumptions should be made more explicit within current conceptualizations of integrated care. As a result, this paper revolves around

the following question: how can we incorporate the organizational dynamics of user and citizen participation when thinking about integrated care? In essence, we explore what it means to not only integrate organizational or professional systems, but also to align these with individuals' diverse and diffuse life-worlds.

Below, we continue by discussing the ambiguous positioning of users and citizens within integrated care research and theorizing. Then, we zoom in on the organizational tensions that help us to better understand and, subsequently, deal with this ambiguity.

6.2 INTEGRATED CARE AND THE AMBIGUOUS POSITION OF USERS AND OTHER CITIZENS

Progressively moving away from the idea that lay involvement is restricted to care users 'patiently' awaiting professional treatment (De Maeseneer et al., 2012; Huber et al., 2011), scholars within (Kaehne, Beacham, & Feather, 2018; Nies, 2014; Sang, 2004) and beyond (Brandsen & Pestoff, 2006; Fung, 2006; Martin, 2008b) the field of integrated care have highlighted the increasing centrality of citizens and communities in organizing care services. In itself, the emergence of integrated care as a policy imperative signifies a growing concern with 'the whole person' within the organization of care services. Following from the realization that people's health and wellbeing are, for a large part, shaped by their broader social environment (De Maeseneer et al., 2012; Nies, 2014), improved connectivity between medical and social domains has become a defining objective within many pursuits of integrated care (Goodwin, Dixon, Anderson, & Wodchis, 2014; Minkman, 2012; Valentijn et al., 2013). The underlying implication is that care services need to be attuned to the 'life-world' of service users and citizens—i.e., to their particular experience of their situation—and that professional and organizational efforts need to be aligned with people's private responsibilities.

Whereas the inclusion of (professional) social care services has become part and parcel of many integrated care approaches (see, e.g., Glasby & Dickinson, 2014; Van Duijn, Zonneveld, Lara Montero, Minkman, & Nies, 2018), scholars and policy makers have argued for further expansion of the scope of integration by 'actively involv[ing] and empower[ing] the people it is serving – both on an individual and collective level' (De Maeseneer et al., 2012, p. 612). Indeed, co-

producing public services with citizens has become an increasingly prominent policy imperative internationally (e.g., in England (Public Participation Team, 2017), the Netherlands (Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties, 2013; Raad voor Volksgezondheid en Samenleving, 2016), Denmark (Kirkegaard & Andersen, 2018) and the United States (Fung, 2015)). Instead of only being passive objects of professional or managerial efforts, citizens are also increasingly becoming active subjects on various levels of care integration (Nies, 2014). Often, such policy ambitions imply that users and other citizens ought to have a more pronounced say in how services are designed and delivered, i.e., granting them more influence over decision making.

At the same time, however, a substantial amount of research highlights a discrepancy between such policy ambitions and citizens' actual participation in organizing services (e.g., Kaehne et al., 2018; Kodner & Spreeuwenberg, 2002; Morgan et al., 2017). At the level of individual care trajectories, for example, scholars have criticized care professionals for failing to appreciate the user perspective (Kodner & Spreeuwenberg, 2002) and for treating a care user's family as an opponent or a nuisance instead of as a partner (Leichsenring, 2004). Moreover, objectives of user empowerment—e.g., enabling participants to 'shape their own lives rather than hav[ing] them shaped by others' (Morgan et al., 2017, p. 8)—often continue to be determined by medical-professional regimes that emphasize disease control (Morgan et al., 2017). At policy and governance levels, scholars have seen managers and policy makers engage in 'tokenistic' or even 'manipulative' efforts at citizen participation (Baur & Abma, 2011; Croft et al., 2016; Maguire & Britten, 2017). Even when participatory efforts are supported by a broad range of stakeholders, they often still fail to deliver on the sought-after results (Marent et al., 2015; Osborne & Strokosch, 2013). Apparently, the often-cited imperative to 'place individuals at the center' does not necessarily lead to a redistribution of power and/or responsibilities within actual processes of care integration (Glimmerveen et al., 2018).

A key question that has not received due attention, then, is why active user and citizen participation has proven so hard to realize. We contend that the limited success of participatory ambitions can, at least in part, be traced back to the field of integrated care itself, in particular to how the field conceptualizes care integration. Despite recurrent calls to foster citizen participation, the

models and frameworks that guide pursuits of integration are still dominated by institutional and professional paradigms. Accordingly, it often remains unclear whether participation is an add-on to an otherwise systems-driven attempt at integration or, alternatively, a more fundamental alteration of citizens' position in the governance and delivery of care services. For example, while Kodner and Spreeuwenberg are critical of 'systems- or organisation-driven' efforts at care integration in their seminal article (Kodner & Spreeuwenberg, 2002, p. 3), their own conceptualization of integrated care leaves limited space for citizens' active participation. By defining it as a 'set of methods and models on the funding, administrative, organisational, service delivery and clinical levels designed to create connectivity, alignment and collaboration within and between the cure and care sectors' (Kodner & Spreeuwenberg, 2002, p. 3), integrated care continues to be an issue of policy makers, managers and professionals. Similarly, Valentijn and colleagues' often-cited conceptual framework highlights the centrality of people's 'personal preferences, needs, and values' (Valentijn et al., 2013, p. 4) as well as 'the needs of the local population' (Valentijn et al., 2013, p. 8). They implicitly position citizens as passive recipients care is being integrated for. Stating that professionals 'have a collective responsibility to provide a continuous, comprehensive, and coordinated continuum of care to a population' (Valentijn et al., 2013, p. 6), which requires the 'collective action of organisations across the entire care continuum' (Valentijn et al., 2013, p. 5), they also portray care integration as a predominantly professional endeavor. Moreover, the various labels they assign to the different levels of integration—distinguishing between clinical, professional, organizational and system-level integration—are also indicative of the assumed professional and institutional character. While we do not question the usefulness and authenticity of these various authors' claims regarding the centrality of 'patients' and 'populations' to integrated care, their frameworks simultaneously insinuate that care users are passive beneficiaries of professional services (Ewert, 2016; Ewert & Evers, 2014).

To a fair extent, we believe that the ambiguous position of citizens is inevitable in pursuits of integrated care (Glimmerveen et al., 2018). Although often promising to put users and citizens in the 'driver's seat', actors involved in care integration face a broad set of other, often competing systemic demands and policy imperatives. Care integration comes with the challenge of reconciling, on

the one hand, people's life-worlds—the need to accommodate the diversity of what matters to individual people (Morgan et al., 2017) and the diffuse and potentially unstable dynamics of their situation (Broese van Groenou, Jacobs, Zwart-Olde, & Deeg, 2016)—and, on the other hand, the technical rationalities of the systems (either professional, organizational or otherwise) through which care services are organized. That such systems have become too detached from people's life-worlds, ergo, obstructing the pursuit of 'what really matters' (Hart & Buiting, 2012) in care delivery, while also inhibiting users' and citizens' opportunities to take responsibility of how care is being organized are common critiques. Even given such a reality, however, such systems, structures, models and guidelines remain essential to organizing equitable, accountable and high-quality services (Raad voor Volksgezondheid en Samenleving, 2016). Claims of putting citizens in the 'driver's seat', consequently, only create a caricature of a key challenge within integrated care: the ongoing need to align these organizational systems with the particularities of people's life-worlds.

We propose a conceptual recalibration of citizens' position in care integration—one that acknowledges the critical, ongoing challenge of aligning systems and life-worlds (Greenhalgh, Robb, & Scambler, 2006) throughout the processes of integration. By making this challenge more explicit, we improve our ability to reflect on a key conundrum surrounding citizen participation in integrated care: to what extent do professionals, managers and policy makers 'structure' participation or, alternatively, are users and other citizens granted the ability to shape the character of the services they (potentially) use? While we may intuitively see the latter as a desirable guiding principle, the reality is often not as straightforward in practice. Person-centered organizing, particularly when users and other citizens become active participants in such efforts, presents us with potential trade-offs and a need to balance or align competing considerations. While it is tempting to promote ambitions that place citizens in 'the driver's seat', the question of who is in charge of care integration remains more complex. In what follows, we explore in more detail what this implies for the position of citizens in integrated care. Acknowledging that participation pursuits often challenge established distributions of control and responsibilities, we highlight the delicate power relations between the various actors involved—an issue that is too often neglected or implicit within integrated care research.

6.3 ORGANIZING CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN CARE INTEGRATION: NAVIGATING FOUR TENSIONS

If a key challenge in the pursuit of integrated care is, indeed, the ongoing need to align systems and life-worlds, then what does this mean for the organizational dynamics of such pursuits? To answer this question, we will now discuss four key organizational tensions that become increasingly salient within participatory care-integration efforts. By moving back and forth between our own research experiences and extant literature on both participation and care integration, we found these four tensions to underlie many of the challenges of realizing effective participation. While we do not claim this list to be exhaustive, we do believe that these four tensions are broadly applicable. Even if different dynamics and challenges exist across different levels of integration (see, e.g., Fredriksson & Tritter, 2017 for a review of the differences between patient and public involvement), each of these tensions may surface at any level of organizing and within vastly different participatory initiatives. By focusing on these tensions, we contribute to an understanding of why efforts at integration may continue to fall short of their ambitions to develop more person-centered and population-based services. By explicating what so often remains implicit in extant literature, we enable actors to more effectively identify and address these organizational tensions in their pursuits of user and citizen participation—including the power dynamics that often shape their manifestation.

In what follows, we discuss each tension by first illustrating how it surfaced within our own ethnographic studies on (tension 1) user participation in a nursing home and (tensions 2, 3 and 4) the community-participation platforms that surrounded a rural care facility. Throughout these studies, conducted between 2013 and 2015, we investigated the contentious processes through which professional provider organizations translated their own policy imperative—to engage with citizens—into concrete participatory practices (see Glimmerveen et al. (2018) and Glimmerveen, Ybema, & Nies, (2019) for more background information). The four illustrations we have drawn from this research involve a variety of issues, ranging from more-fundamental aspects of local service design (e.g., deciding whether a care facility stays open as a 'joint

venture' between a professional provider organization and a local community) to somewhat-smaller issues pertaining to everyday service provision (e.g., how to improve the meals provided in a nursing home). Nonetheless, each example revolves around an attempt to integrate 'lay' perspectives and concerns within the professional organization of services. Moreover, each highlights the intricate challenges of such pursuits, even when they pertain to issues that may seem fairly straightforward or trivial at first glance. Moving from these illustrations to our conceptual review, we then discuss the diverse manifestations of each tension within both individual-level and collective-level pursuits of integrated care.

TABLE 6.1. Overview of tensions

	DOMAIN	SOURCE OF TENSION
1.	Expertise	The need to reconcile lay and professional knowledge
2.	Control	The need to reconcile local alignment and central coordination
3.	Inclusion and exclusion	The need to reconcile citizens' diversity and their formation as participants
4.	Interests	The need to reconcile the concerns of citizens and organizational members

6.3.1 Tension 1. An integrated knowledge base: the need to reconcile lay and professional knowledge

Illustration 1. Tapping into users' experiences: 'person-centered meals'

In response to complaints about the meals served in the nursing home, the responsible manager joined a client-council meeting—after all, the clients themselves knew best what was needed for improvement. As he tried to capture clients' views and insights, however, the manager's questions were heavily shaped by his own professional knowledge of how to improve people's 'food experience', e.g.: 'How do you like the current

food presentation and plate lay-out?' Ridiculing the question, one resident jokingly replied: 'Maybe they can put a flower on our trays…!' Expressing his relief in discovering a lack of major complaints, the manager soon left the meeting. It was only after he left that people started sharing their dissatisfaction and how they thought the meals could be improved.

(Based on the first author's field notes)

What counts as legitimate knowledge within organizational processes and how is such knowledge generated and utilized? By definition, the pursuit of person-centered integrated care involves the amalgamation of multiple sources of knowledge (Raad voor Volksgezondheid en Samenleving, 2017). The emergence of citizens as active participants in care integration can be seen as an attempt to more explicitly include lay knowledge in the organization of services. Within individual care trajectories, such efforts may include attempts to more actively engage with care users (or their significant others) and their situation-specific knowledge that 'rests on their own particular experience' (Fredriksson & Tritter, 2017, p. 100). Similarly, at more collective governance levels, citizens or users may contribute 'with local perspectives, values and attitudes that are not based on expert or experiential knowledge […] but rather based on civic knowledge and the experience generated from membership and participation in particular communities' (Fredriksson & Tritter, 2017, p. 100). At either level, active engagement with lay insights often stems from a recognition of the limitations of 'formal' or 'expert' knowledge. Reflecting a broader trend towards a 'pluralisation of knowledge' (Lancaster et al., 2017, p. 60), such engagement may catalyze the movement towards person-centered and population-based services.

Integrating these different sources of knowledge, however, does present specific challenges. As the illustration above exemplifies, attempts to 'tap into' user knowledge and experience remain highly constrained when these attempts are organized to 'fit' within established organizational systems or professional frames of reference. While such attempts at engagement may end up legitimizing established systems or managerial decisions, they often do not contribute to an actual pluralization of knowledge and perspectives (see also, e.g., Dedding and Slager's (2013) reflections on the limitations of institutionalized client councils).

Moreover, professionals may choose to only engage with what they consider to be the 'correct' type of lay knowledge, i.e., they may actively select, educate and socialize lay participants and, in the process, 'professionalize' those who participate (El Enany et al., 2013, p. 24). Against this background, even when citizens are actively engaged, their insights may not necessarily provide an effective alternative to established 'expert' knowledge bases.

Consequently, despite the fact that lay insights have the potential to constitute a counterpoise to the privileging of professional and/or 'formalized' knowledge (Lancaster et al., 2017), the fulfilment of such potential is far from self-evident. To be clear, we do not claim the inherent superiority of any one of these forms of knowledge over the other and we certainly do not argue for a general 'de-professionalization' of care (Trappenburg & van Beek, 2017). Nonetheless, we do argue for increased reflexivity among policy makers, managers and practitioners when balancing and integrating different, sometimes competing sources of knowledge. Without such reflexivity, these actors' established frames of reference are likely to prevail, even when they deliberately try to engage with lay knowledge and perspectives.

6.3.2 Tension 2. Organizing for participation: the need to reconcile local and central coordination

Illustration 2. The necessity of (not) setting boundaries: challenging an 'open' process

Facing empty rooms and a compromised financial situation, the provider organization's leadership made a clear statement: continuing the rural care home's operations was only possible with the active participation of local citizens. What such participation meant for local service governance, however, was less clear and remained subject to ongoing debate. During the initial meetings between citizens and employees, the organization's regional manager emphasized the 'openness' of this joint trajectory. He explicitly refused to 'decide ahead of time what things

will look like [in the future]'. In the same vein, his colleague scolded the usual tendency to 'formulate SMART objectives' instead proposing to 'embark on a journey together' with citizens, without knowing where they would end up. Their colleague from the logistics department, however, grew nervous and wished his superiors would set clear targets: 'At what point do we say, "We can't continue like this, we need to close the facilities?" [...] We need to be more specific.'

(Based on the first author's field work – also see Glimmerveen et al. (2018))

How to effectively organize participatory processes of care integration? Generally speaking, successful care integration is associated with horizontal mechanisms of coordination (Kodner & Spreeuwenberg, 2002)—both within individual organizations and within the broader care systems that encompass them. Hierarchical control tends to be seen as a barrier for alignment across organizational and professional boundaries (Leichsenring, 2004; Vakkayil, 2012; Williams, 2002). Similarly, scholars have demonstrated that participatory processes tend to be more effective within decentralized and less standardized organizational environments (Croft et al., 2016; Loeffler & Bovaird, 2016). In fact, citizen participation by definition entails a degree of decentralization. Within individual care trajectories, for example, user-participation initiatives around often attempt to move away from hierarchical provider-patient relationships. Such initiatives implore care professionals to support their users to 'live well' while also taking into consideration their medical, social and psychological conditions as well as other aspects of their personal situation (work, housing, social network, etc.). Because doing so requires continuous adjustment, both to an individual's particular (and potentially unstable) situation and to a vast diversity of individual care-user opinions regarding the meaning of 'living well' (Morgan et al., 2017), these professionals must practice flexibility. Similarly, on more-collective levels of service governance, organizational hierarchies may prompt managers to constrain the space for citizen participation when facing systemic requirements and responsibilities (Croft et al., 2016). On both levels, the efforts of participating citizens are arguably more 'difficult to steer and control' (Gobet &

Emilsson, 2013, p. 129) than the efforts of 'formal' institutionalized actors who are subject to hierarchical governance. As a result, citizen participation and flexible horizontal coordination seem to be two sides of the same coin (Durose et al., 2013).

At the same time, the literature on integrated care and citizen participation also make a contradicting observation. Scholars have pointed to the limitations of decentralization and the inescapability of some degree of hierarchy (Leichsenring, 2004). Paradoxically, while often being portrayed as a pathway towards integration, decentralization is also associated with the negative consequences of fragmentation, as it may cultivate division within complex organizations and, subsequently, 'interfere with efficiency and quality goals' (Kodner, 2009, p. 8). Solely relying on horizontal alignment among local actors without applying hierarchical control or market-based incentives may lead to a lot of 'talk' in local committees but no 'action' (Rodríguez et al., 2007). Moreover, even without imposing centrally-formulated standards and protocols to steer the behavior of care professionals, local actors must still account for the quality of their work on more collective levels, particularly if central actors (often governments) retain overall responsibilities over the care system. Such accountability requirements often act as implicit disciplinary frameworks, which unavoidably steer local practices and, as a result, effectively recentralize decentralized ways of working (Raad voor Volksgezondheid en Samenleving, 2016). Paradoxically, it seems almost inevitable (and often desirable) that decentralization—which provides the flexibility required for successful care integration and citizen participation—should be accompanied with at least some degree of centralization.

Policy makers, managers, professionals and citizens all face the challenge of dealing with a push for both local alignment and central coordination, sometimes leaving space for 'bottom-up' flexibility and mutual adjustment while at other times enforcing 'top-down' alignment. In pursuits of integrated care, we consequently contend, the question of 'who is in control of what' should be made explicit and needs to be actively negotiated across all levels of integration. Continuing to see decentralization as a panacea serves to obscure, rather than answer, this question.

6.3.3 Tension 3. Finding your partner: citizens' diversity and their formation as participants

Illustration 3. The fragmentation of participatory integration: grasping 'the community'

The organization's management had decided to host a meeting with citizens at a local church's community hall, a venue right in the middle of town. This, they hoped, would stimulate local citizens' feeling of ownership in the process, symbolically conveying that the challenges faced by the care home were of key concern to both the organization and the local community. A few days before the meeting was to commence, however, management discovered that a considerable number of the town's inhabitants belonged to a different church and may refuse to attend a meeting at this location. Facing such fragmentation within the local community, they eventually decided to organize the meeting at their own venue after all.

(Based on the first author's field work)

Who exactly are the 'citizens' who are supposed to emerge as partners in care integration? While citizen participation has become an increasingly prominent imperative for service organization, references to 'citizens', 'the community' or 'the public' often remain vague (Contandriopoulos et al., 2004; Kenny et al., 2015; Martin, 2008a). Participating citizens are generally neither 'institutionally, vocationally nor financially bound' (Gobet & Emilsson, 2013, p. 129). In fact, dealing with such ambiguity seems to be a defining aspect of citizen involvement in care integration. When pursuing community participation in service governance, for example, the lack of a clear and institutionalized 'local infrastructure' (Glimmerveen et al., 2018) in such communities fuels such ambiguity: to what extent are those who actually participate representative of a certain population or a particular viewpoint? A willingness to participate in the first place may also differ among citizens, especially if participation means that they are granted new responsibilities over the provision of local services. In order to grasp such diverse

perspectives, the usual policy ideal is to pursue 'participation by all stakeholders' (Cornwall, 2008, p. 276). Within individual care trajectories, actors face a similar diversity. For example, while 'the importance of involving informal caregivers is emphasized in official documentation' (Wieringen & Groenou, 2015, p. 67), in practice it is considerably less clear-cut who these informal caregivers are and with what they can or may want to be engaged. The category of 'informal caregivers' is not only extremely diverse, but informal caregiving networks may also be unstable and evolve in unexpected ways (Broese van Groenou et al., 2016; Kemp, Ball, & Perkins, 2013). As such, and in sum, across these different levels, citizen engagement comes with the challenge of dealing with the diversity and diffuseness of citizens as potential partners—each of which has his or her own perspective on whether (and, if so, how) they can or want to contribute to the provision of local care services.

At the same time, concerns about citizen diversity and participants' representativeness are easily 'displaced by more practical considerations about the challenge of getting a(ny) group of individuals who might reasonably be considered to constitute a public engaged in the process' (Martin, 2012, p. 1852). Citizen participation needs to be operationalized in order to 'get it done' in practice. In the context of efforts aimed at participatory service governance, this means that citizens must be 'constituted as actors' (Barnes et al., 2003, p. 396) in order to actually participate. In this process, it may be tempting and pragmatic to only work with those 'archetypal active citizens' who are already constructive and willing to cooperate (Martin, 2008a); however, this effectively excludes the participation of more-critical citizens in the process (Barnes et al., 2003). Accommodating diversity can also be challenging within individual care trajectories. For example, even in a setting in which professional nursing home staff actively voiced their support of family involvement, 'staff members were strongly focused on work routines, and families were expected to fit in' (Haesler et al., 2007, pp. 392–393). Faced with citizens' diverse and diffuse character, officials and professionals inevitably try to structure citizen involvement, i.e., they aim to 'fix' their diverse and diffuse natures in their attempts to make participation possible and 'manageable'.

The need to enable citizens to 'act' as concrete actors—which inevitably results in the inclusion of some and the exclusion of others in the process—

constitutes a challenging-but-inescapable aspect of participatory care integration. It requires a balancing act: the need to, on the one hand, structure citizen contributions to effectively feed into established organizational processes and responsibilities (e.g., clinical decision-making or service design) while, on the other hand, sufficiently accommodating citizens' inherent diversity and diffuseness.

6.3.4 Tension 4. Integrating interests: the need to reconcile citizens' and organizations' concerns

Illustration 4. When concerns collide: partnership vs. financial pressure

Earlier in the care home's trajectory, the organization's previous director had decided that the care home would stay open in spite of current losses. As a major advocate of participatory service design, he concluded that honouring citizens' interests to keep the facility open outweighed the importance of the organization's compromised financial status. After years of positive returns, he declared it 'justifiable to invest when times are harder'. Now that a new director had taken office, however, the organization's core mission was redefined in favour of a more medicalized approach to care provision, which effectively marginalized citizens' influence in the process. As a result, the new director considered the same competing issues and arrived at an opposite conclusion: the care home would need to close. Participating citizens, whose initial engagement was supposed to prevent 'unilateral decision-making', were only informed about the decision several months after it had been made.

(Based on the first author's field work – also see Glimmerveen et al. (2018))

How can an organization effectively align its own interests with those of the people they are supposed to serve? As a counterpoise to the commercialized, bureaucratized and professionalized nature of care services, participation is

often pursued in an attempt to attune care systems to the concerns of potential users and their broader communities. On the level of service governance, citizen participation is seen as a strategy designed to integrate 'community values into local decision-making processes' (Abelson et al., 2003, p. 243). Similarly, within individual care trajectories, user participation can help to align services with 'what matters to people' and with their abilities 'to shape their own lives' (Morgan et al., 2017, p. 4). Across the various levels of integration—both around individual users and on more-collective levels—participation may, therefore, improve the 'fit' between care services and the concerns of users, informal caregivers and other citizens. Nevertheless, the crux of the question remains: What needs to happen when citizens' concerns are at odds with the objectives and interests that prevail within the organizations that provide, commission or regulate care (Pestoff, Osborne, & Brandsen, 2006)?

Because citizen participation is always just one policy imperative among many others, engaged citizens may still end up playing a marginal role within decision-making processes (Glimmerveen et al., 2018; Glimmerveen, Ybema, et al., 2019; Lee & Romano, 2013; Yanow, 2004). Professionals, managers and policy makers continuously need to weigh the relative importance of competing interests. Within a market-based system, for example, the need to build long-term relationships with participating citizens may conflict with the need to remain competitive and to 'capture' customers (Fotaki, 2011; Mol, 2008). Similarly, within individual care trajectories, both user preferences and informal caregiver involvement may at times be at odds with professional norms and guidelines, for example, in terms of personal care, food safety or medication delivery (Nies, Van der Veen, & Leichsenring, 2013). Faced with such complex webs of competing principles, different employees of a single organization may strike different balances when weighing citizen concerns against logistical, financial, medical-professional or other considerations. Harbouring different views on their organization's key mission, employees of a care facility may disagree on whether they are mostly a medical service provider (which reinforces a more-hierarchical provider-client relationship) or whether they primarily seek to support citizens' broader wellbeing (which reinforces a more egalitarian partnership) (Glimmerveen et al., 2018). Aligning such disparate normative frameworks is often a contentious endeavour.

For our part, we see this potential for conflict and controversy as not only intrinsic to participation, but also as not necessarily a bad thing. If actors' competing perspectives on 'good' or 'appropriate' care (and how this should be managed) are neither actively juxtaposed nor, subsequently, aligned within an organisation however, then there is a risk of participation getting 'compartmentalized' (Kenny et al., 2015) and boxed off; i.e., of it being seen as a 'project' or even a 'hobby' of a designated department or staff member. In such cases, the potential conflict between disparate concerns persists but is left unaddressed when, in fact, such conflict needs to be dealt with, not ignored, for participation to be effective.

6.4 DISCUSSION

In this paper, we have zoomed in on the organizational tensions that we consider intrinsic to participatory efforts at care integration but that often remain unaddressed within integrated care literature. By focusing on these tensions, we are able to contribute to our understanding of why such efforts may fall short of their ambition to develop more person-centered and population-based services. In particular, we have highlighted the essential and ongoing challenge inherent in the need to align the technical-rational systems through which care services are organized with users' diverse and diffuse life-worlds; the pursuit of which may affect established distributions of control and responsibilities. By placing this notion front and center, we generate a more realistic outlook on the opportunities, limitations and pitfalls of citizen participation in care integration. Below, we will now discuss two key implications for the field of integrated care and propose avenues for future research.

First and foremost, our discussion demonstrates that the imperative of 'putting the individual at the centre of all interventions' (Leichsenring, 2004, p. 4) often turns out to be a somewhat misleading metaphor within integrated care practices. The position of users and other citizens in integrated care is inherently more ambiguous, even when their active participation is considered an explicit objective. Suggesting that they are 'in the driver's seat' assumes both that their perspectives and concerns can be dealt with in isolation and that they are equipped with the capacity and opportunity to steer or govern. In

turn, these assumptions neglect to recognize the trade-offs that are inherent to participatory service governance (i.e., the need to reconcile: (1) lay and professional knowledge, (2) local alignment and central coordination, (3) citizens' diversity and their formation as participants, and (4) the concerns of both citizens and organizational actors). By disregarding these tensions, citizens may, paradoxically, wind up in a 'central'-but-still-marginal position, i.e., that of being passive recipients that care is integrated for.

Nevertheless, participation can make a key contribution to care integration—but it requires an explicit focus on the organizational tensions to which it inherently gives rise. Therefore, we propose the following:

Proposition 1: Because dealing with the tension between (a) the various technical-rational systems through which care services are organized and (b) people's diffuse life-worlds is both an ongoing challenge and a key objective of care integration, such integration requires a collaborative effort; not just among professionals and other institutional stakeholders, but also including users and other citizens as active participants. When citizens are allegedly placed 'in the driver's seat' or, alternatively, treated as passive recipients of managerial or professional attempts at integration, this tension is easily overlooked or left unaddressed.

As a second contribution, our discussion highlights the importance of approaching integration as a dynamic, ongoing process and not 'merely' as an issue of service design. Rather, the deep-seated tensions presented by participation and care integration require the continuous navigation of multiple legitimate-but-contradictory objectives (e.g., the need to create space for local alignment while still meeting centrally-formulated operational and governance standards). Within extant literature, this processual character of integration has not always been sufficiently recognized. Integrated care is often conceptualized as something that is pursued 'by design' (NHS England, 2016). Take, for example, the often-cited definition of integrated care as 'a coherent set of methods and models [...] designed to create connectivity, alignment and collaboration' (Kodner & Spreeuwenberg, 2002, p. 3). By concealing the intricate challenge of juggling disparate considerations within dynamically evolving

contexts—both between and within the organizations and the communities involved—a focus on integration 'by design' overemphasizes integration as a linear process. Bearing in mind the 'unbound' and 'fundamentally uncertain' character of citizen participation (Gobet & Emilsson, 2013), these concerns become even more pressing. Moreover, the literature often treats integration as a care system's ideal end state, i.e., one in which users 'experience services as "seamless"' (Leichsenring, 2004, p. 5). In pursuing a 'seamless' experience and process of care delivery, however, professionals and managers may try to keep friction 'backstage', which (often) unintentionally restricts users' and other citizens' potential contributions to the relevant issues at hand. Instead, we argue for a conceptualization that highlights integration's processual character. We therefore propose:

Proposition 2: Because the pursuit of participatory care integration reinforces the need to approach integration as an ongoing activity and process, not as a care system's '(end) state', the need to align systems with users' dynamically evolving life-worlds requires continuous attention to the friction that inherently emerges in that process. If integration is approached as a 'one-off' or static effort at system redesign, participation is bound to wither.

In sum, care integration is not only dependent on system integration. It is also dependent on ongoing efforts to align (a) the professional, organizational and institutional frameworks through which practitioners, managers and policy makers structure their work with (b) the dynamics and diffuseness of users' and citizens' life-worlds. From this perspective, the continued participation of not only (potential) care users, but also of their significant others and other citizens, is a requirement for attuning care services to what matters most in people's lives—to supporting their health and wellbeing. As such, we call on scholars, policy makers and practitioners of integrated care to actively deal with, instead of ignore, the tensions that inherently emerge when seeking to align these systems and life-worlds.

Adopting such a conceptualization of care integration opens up relevant avenues for future research. In particular, we would like to highlight the possibilities for examining an under-investigated aspect of integrated care:

power dynamics. In one of his five seminal 'laws of integration', Leutz states that '[t]he one who integrates calls the tune' (Leutz, 1999, p. 97). Indeed, efforts to engage citizens as active 'integrators' are often presented as attempts to give citizens more control over the services they may potentially use. Nonetheless, the field of integrated care is relatively limited in paying explicit attention to the power dynamics triggered by such pursuits—recent work by Kaehne (2018) being a notable exception. Scholarship outside the field, however, certainly proves the relevance of a more power-sensitive analysis of care integration (see, e.g., Currie, Finn, & Martin, 2008; Liberati, Gorli, & Scaratti, 2016). This becomes even more pressing when it comes to citizen participation. Participatory efforts at care integration constitute a balancing act—one in which the balance is easily skewed towards individual organizations' concerns at the expense of citizens' interests (Glimmerveen et al., 2018). Ample case studies illustrate how citizen participation can be made instrumental to the interests of both professionals and public service agencies and how it can be marginalized within decision-making processes (Allen et al., 2012; Contandriopoulos, 2004; Glimmerveen et al., 2018; Morgan et al., 2017). Although professionals, managers and policy makers may consciously pursue citizen empowerment, the pressures of institutional, organizational or professional obligations may inadvertently end up disempowering citizens in the process (Contandriopoulos et al., 2004). As such, we consider the critical scrutiny of the power dynamics of citizen participation in care integration an ethical imperative. When doing so, the four tensions described in this paper (i.e., those that result from the need to reconcile (1) lay and professional knowledge, (2) local alignment and central coordination, (3) citizens' diversity and their formation as participants, and (4) the concerns of citizens and organizational actors) may serve as a relevant research guide by pointing out the areas in which such power dynamics are likely to be found.

6.5 CONCLUDING REMARKS

Inspired by our own research and based on a critical review of key publications in the field, we have sought to further the debate on citizen participation within care integration. If we approach care not only as a product but also as something that is constituted within the interactions between care users,

lay caregivers and professionals (Kaehne et al., 2018; Mol, 2008), then co-production inevitably lies at the heart of all care delivery (Batalden et al., 2016). Illustrated by the field's predominantly professional and organizational characterization of integration (Kodner & Spreeuwenberg, 2002; Valentijn et al., 2013), we believe that this notion has yet to be fully reflected within established approaches to integrated care. In our view, in order to realize ambitions of person-centeredness and population-based care, we should stop treating citizen participation as an add-on to an otherwise professional, organizational and institution paradigm. Likewise, we must refrain from idealizing participation as an easy remedy or an undisputed objective. In practice, the intricate tensions between systems and life-worlds are an inevitable part of the process of pursuing participatory care integration.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

7.1 THE CONTESTED TERRAIN OF CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

As demonstrated within this doctoral thesis, pursuing citizen participation can be a process fraught with ambiguity and controversy. While often hailed as a key ingredient for public service improvement, participatory efforts are by no means undisputed. Some welcome citizen participation as a potential remedy for public services that, in their eyes, have become too bureaucratic, supply-driven or paternalistic. Others may portray it as something of a Trojan horse, i.e., by promising citizens' empowerment while actually serving governments and provider organizations as they cut budgets and deflect responsibilities for unpopular decisions. Socially and politically, citizen participation is contested terrain. Our understanding of the everyday processes in which such contestation gradually affects the parameters of participatory initiatives, however, is still limited.

My research was constructed to explore this terrain. By empirically focusing on the field of long-term elderly care, I was able to scrutinize how participatory efforts develop over time as their concrete parameters and implications are negotiated by the various actors whose work and lives are potentially affected. Although the participatory initiative I primarily investigated eventually failed to deliver on its advocates' ambitions, the case did deliver a great deal of insight into the key dynamics and dilemmas that surface when participation is pursued. Too often, these dynamics and dilemmas remain obscured within scholarly, political or policy discussions, especially when citizen participation is treated as a panacea for problem solving in service design and delivery.

While empirically focusing on citizen participation, this thesis also forms a broader inquiry into pursuits of more inclusive modes of organizing. In particular, I have investigated people's attempts to soften the distinction between alleged insiders and outsiders to a particular organizational setting, i.e., as they try to foster alignment across (or entirely efface) hierarchical, departmental

or other established organizational divides. Following earlier scholarship on organizational boundaries and boundary work (Paulsen & Hernes, 2003; Sturdy, Handley, et al., 2009), I have shown how such pursuits of inclusiveness by no means mean that boundaries lose their significance to structuring organizational life. On the contrary, I have demonstrated that participatory efforts are likely to turn boundaries into symbolic rallying points as actors try to reconstruct insider-outsider relations. Ironically, pursuits of inclusive modes of organizing often increase the salience of (old or new) organizational divides, triggering actors to make these divides explicit. Extant literature has previously been limited in its ability to fully explain the everyday processes in which these reconstructions of insider-outsider relations take place.

In this thesis, I have developed a theoretical approach to boundary work that sheds new light on these intricate dynamics of 'inclusive' organizing. I have tried to disentangle the convoluted processes in which actors (re)draw boundaries (a) over time, i.e., by taking a processual approach to studying sequences of boundary enactments as actors gradually (re)structure their relationships within an organizational setting; and (b) across multiple locales, i.e., by studying the dispersed character of boundary work, focusing on the (dis)connections between people's boundary enactments in different organizational sites. Highlighting these processual and dispersed natures then allowed me to more fully grasp boundary work's (c) political dimension, i.e., by studying how boundary processes both reflect and affect people's abilities to exert influence within a given organizational setting. By explicitly addressing these three dimensions of boundary work, my thesis demonstrates that, often contrary to advocates' intentions or expectations, inclusionary efforts tend to trigger exclusionary effects (and vice versa). As actors circumscribe abstract notions of 'inclusion', they simultaneously bargain over: the issues that are (not) included in the realm of participation, the actors that are (not) considered legitimate participants and the extent to which participation is allowed to compromise established positions of authority.

In this concluding chapter, after positioning my research approach in relation to extant work on citizen participation, I will present the key findings of my research: how do people redefine insider-outsider relations as they negotiate the emergence, parameters and significance of participatory initiatives? I will then reflect on the practical implications of my findings for how we look at citizen

participation: what do they tell us about participation's potential as a pathway for service improvement? Finally, I will conclude this thesis by reflecting on my findings' theoretical significance for understanding organizational boundary dynamics and by pointing out avenues for future research.

7.2 STUDYING CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

Over the past decades, citizen participation has received a considerable amount of attention in different scholarly fields. This burgeoning volume of research has been characterized as a 'conceptual muddle' (Marent et al., 2015) with citizen involvement being studied via a variety of concepts (e.g., co-production, participatory governance, public participation) and theoretical entry points. How does my study relate to such extant work and, importantly, what does it contribute?

In my analysis, I have approached citizen participation as an emergent and contentious organizational phenomenon (Contandriopoulos, 2004). As discussed in Chapter 1, citizen participation is sometimes portrayed as a catch-all concept that 'relates to different categories of lay people, serves different functions, involves different issues and implies different forms and methods of implementation' (Marent et al., 2015, p. 828). Instead of providing strict operational definitions to delineate which practices do or do not qualify as participation, I observed the dynamics through which such definitions were subjected to contestation and gradually redefined among the actors in my field of study.

First, this allowed me to move beyond linear and normative accounts that suggest that more 'genuine' participation is inherently desirable—a notion echoed by, for example, the highly influential 'ladder of citizen participation' (Arnstein, 1969) that treats complete citizen control as 'the pinnacle of involvement' (Tritter & McCallum, 2006, p. 158). Positing citizen participation as an undisputed objective may downplay actors' often ambiguous orientations to participation and the regularly contentious nature of its pursuit. Likewise, doing so also draws attention away from participation's unexpected, undesired and sometimes undesirable consequences.

Second, my explicit accounts of such ambiguity and contestation allowed me to provide a critical counterpoise to managerialist readings of participation. Fung's 'democracy cube' (Fung, 2006, 2015), for example, explores the options

available to policy makers and managers when determining who is selected as a participant, how participatory processes are designed and what degree of control participants are granted in decision-making. While Fung's framework makes it possible to move beyond one-dimensional approaches, it still provides a functionalistic account of the different facets of participation, treating these as 'design options'. From this vantage point, citizen participation would continue to be seen as a tool in the hands of managers with undisputed intentions and objectives. This disregards how the rationale for and objectives of participation often remain contested among the variety of actors involved (Cornwall, 2008; Pedersen & Johannsen, 2016).

In order to address the limitations of such one-dimensional (Arnstein, 1969) and/or managerialist (Fung, 2006) accounts of citizen participation, I place my study in the tradition of critical scholarship (e.g., Barnes et al., 2003; Contandriopoulos, 2004; Learmonth, 2003; Martin, 2008a). From this angle, I have investigated participation as a contentious and emergent issue, and as an organizational phenomenon and political ambition that potentially challenges established ways of governing and delivering care services. What, then, does my study contribute to existing critical scholarship on citizen participation?

Extant research has already demonstrated that competing rationales and approaches may co-exist within individual pursuits of participation (e.g., Callaghan & Wistow, 2006; Cornwall, 2008; Fotaki, 2011), but these accounts generally lack firm empirical grounding in the day-to-day practices and contingent interactions through which such pursuits gradually take shape. Consequently, current literature is limited in its theorizing of how contestation over the scope and character of participation affects the broader development of participatory initiatives. By investigating these very dynamics, my thesis contributes to an in-depth account of how actors' disparate orientations play out over time and affect the direction in which these initiatives evolve. In particular, I have tried to untangle the often-messy processes by which such contestation takes place—not only among actors on the 'front-line' of participation (i.e., between citizen-participants and the representatives of an 'inviting' organization), but also among different employees within these 'inviting' organizations. Investigating these processes up close by relying on an ethnographic methodology, I studied how the meaning and implications of participation were gradually redefined by a range of

different actors and on various organizational platforms. In this way, my thesis helps explain the convoluted and contentious dynamics through which abstract policy ambitions are translated into concrete participatory practices.

Moving on, the following section revisits the research questions I posed in the beginning of this thesis. In answering these questions, I outline the key insights that emerged from my inquiries into citizen participation and, more broadly, what these mean for how we understand people's efforts to redefine insider-outsider relations within an organization setting. After presenting these key findings, I will more explicitly formulate their implications for how we approach the issue of citizen participation (section 7.3) as well as their theoretical contributions to scholarship on organizational boundaries and insider-outsider dynamics (section 7.4).

7.3 KEY FINDINGS: BARGAINING OVER BOUNDARIES IN THE ORGANIZATION OF CARE

Approaching citizen participation as a contentious organizational phenomenon, I have studied how people bargained over the reconstitution of insider-outsider relations within the context of a long-term care facility. In doing so, my research was guided by the following main research question:

How do actors (re)define insider-outsider relations as they negotiate the emergence, parameters and significance of alleged-outsiders' participation within an organizational setting?

In order to systematically answer this question, I will first revisit the initial three sub-questions I posed in the opening chapter of this thesis. These questions focused on how people negotiate (1) the issues that are (not) included to the realm of participation, (2) the actors that are (not) considered to be legitimate participants and (3) the extent to which participation is allowed to compromise established positions of authority. (The fourth sub-question, which scrutinizes my findings' implications for how we conceptualize boundary work, will be addressed separately in section 7.4.)

First, based on my empirical investigations of how care employees dealt

with competing orientations on what citizen participation ought to be about, I will answer the following question:

> *(1.) How do actors demarcate which issues fall within the scope of participation (and which issues do not) as they negotiate the parameters of a participatory initiative?*

My inquiries into citizen participation demonstrate that competing notions of 'appropriate' participation, and the processes through which these competing notions are dealt with, play a key role in how participatory initiatives evolve over time. Triggering actors to dispute which issues ought to be included or excluded from the realm of participation, determining the scope of engagement is a highly political affair. Within my case study, citizens and employees often debated, both amongst each other and amongst themselves, whether or not particular issues should be open to participants' scrutiny. Broadly speaking, such debate was often underpinned by two incongruent notions of participation: should citizens be engaged as partners within strategic decision-making processes or, alternatively, should their contributions be limited those of 'mere' operational volunteers? How actors settled such competing orientations was key to understanding the direction in which their participatory efforts evolved.

To negotiate this scope of engagement, actors move back and forth between competing boundary enactments as they bargain over the space that is available for participation. My research highlights the importance of people's rhetorical strategies as they try to settle the boundary disputes that emerge in this process. In particular, actors may try to either politicize or depoliticize such (potential) disputes, i.e., by either magnifying or downplaying the incongruence of alternative ideas about the legitimate scope of participation. If successful, these rhetorical strategies can effectively shape what participation is (not) about. For example, when successfully portraying alternative viewpoints as 'the other side of the coin' in the pursuit of a supposedly shared objective, more fundamental critiques to participatory efforts may be effectively neutralized. Such depoliticization, however, constitutes more than a one-off effort. The existence of competing perspectives on what participation ought to be about provides an ongoing potential for (re-)politicizing the scope of engagement. As I will discuss

in more detail later (when answering the third sub-question), the efficacy of such rhetorical strategies is heavily shaped by the extent to which (de)politicizing claims are supported by more powerful actors within the organizational hierarchy. As such, 'front-line' bargaining over the 'proper' realm of participation remains highly contingent on the broader power dynamics within an organization.

In sum:

The variety of actors involved in participatory initiatives makes demarcating the realm of participation an inherently contentious affair. Investigating the political manoeuvring used to deal with competing viewpoints—i.e., as actors politicize the existence of alternative views to challenge the status quo or, instead, as they try to neutralize such challenges—is key to understanding why people are (un)able to make their interpretation of 'appropriate' participation both materialize and proliferate.

In short, demarcating the scope of 'external' engagement is a markedly 'internal' political affair.

In addition to scrutinizing how actors negotiate what participation is about, I also investigated who actually participates within participatory efforts:

> *(2.) How do actors demarcate who qualifies as a legitimate participant (and who does not) as they negotiate the parameters of a participatory initiative?*

When policy ambitions are translated into concrete participatory efforts, abstract references to a purported constituency (in my study: 'citizens') need to be further operationalized and circumscribed. Particularly within public administration literature, the selection of participants is often treated as a relatively clear-cut and functional 'design choice' (Fung, 2006, p. 70). By providing alternative accounts of such participant selection, critical scholars have been able to highlight organizations' deliberate attempts at co-opting a selection of 'willing' citizens to

advance their own interests (Hodge, 2005; Lee & Romano, 2013). In my study, I have tried to move beyond both such functionalist and such cynical accounts by empirically zooming in on the micro-dynamics of inclusion and exclusion through which concrete sets of participants emerge and develop over time. Studying these dynamics, I gave particular scrutiny to how people try to legitimize their respective positions within the governance of services.

Most notably, my research demonstrates the entanglement of the legitimacy claims made by (1) the actors who invite participation and (2) the actors who respond to such invitations (i.e., citizen-participants). An awareness of this entanglement is key to understanding how a selection of participants emerges over time. By confirming that those citizens who choose to participate are indeed legitimate representatives of some local constituency, 'inviting' actors reinforce their own status of being responsive to this constituency's needs. Similarly, by acknowledging the legitimacy of those inviting their participation, citizen-participants themselves also boost their own status as 'good partners' and, as a result, enhance their abilities to influence local governance issues. These dynamics do not necessarily result from actors deliberately colluding or from people's cynical attempts to advance their self-interests. Particularly when pressed to produce and showcase concrete results of participatory efforts (for example, by a central management team), a finite amount of space is available for dealing with more critical voices (plus: critics themselves may already be less inclined to 'take a seat at the table'). Such settings may give rise to a tenacious propensity to establish 'constructive collaboration' as the appropriate form of participation. While this notion may echo the democratizing ambitions of participation advocates, it may equally lead to actors 'legitimately' discarding those critics who fail to adhere to this norm of constructive collaboration. As such, my analysis reveals the paradoxical processes through which participatory ambitions may drive participation advocates to marginalize critical voices, even when this contradicts their own democratic intentions.

In sum:

Participatory initiatives, even when explicitly pursued to foster more inclusive modes of organizing, have a tendency to boil down to a more exclusive coalition of the willing. Critical voices may be 'legitimately' marginalized under the imperative of constructive collaboration. Failing to recognize the exclusionary potential of inclusionary efforts obscures an important political dimension of the participatory process, covering it with a veil of selective inclusion.

In short, 'who participates' is shaped by the often-unintentional exclusionary effects of actors' inclusionary efforts.

(3.) How do internal power dynamics (i.e., within an organization's notional boundaries) affect both a participatory initiative's front-line dynamics and the initiative's impact on established organizational practices?

My research shows that, when explaining whether citizen participation has an impact on the work practices or decisions participants try to influence, the internal power dynamics within the 'inviting' organization play an important mediating role. Within the extant literature, participation is often deemed more effective in a decentralized organizational environment, echoing the idea that hierarchical control tends to act as a barrier for success (Croft et al., 2016; Loeffler & Bovaird, 2016). My findings present a more complex picture. My research, paradoxically, demonstrates the importance of hierarchical enforcement for the success pursuit of an inclusive, less-hierarchical approach towards alleged outsiders. In other words, central management support provides participation advocates with a mandate to correct colleagues who violate the imperative of inclusion. Withdrawal of this hierarchical support, in contrast, can be detrimental to the pursuit of participation. As a result, top-down interventions can either effectively enforce and facilitate the push for an inclusive way of working 'on the ground' or effectively kill it.

Moreover, even when the local engagement of alleged outsiders appears productive, 'internal' organizational power dynamics still shape such engagement's significance to those processes participants strive to influence. After participants

have been engaged, there is no guarantee that their input will indeed be taken into account by internal 'decision-makers' or that it will otherwise affect the status quo. It is therefore critical to investigate whether and how participants' input 'traverses' across hierarchical boundaries and whether it is has any impact on more distant organizational processes. My research demonstrates that when front-line employees lack the ability to influence strategic decision-making within their organization, it is unlikely that their engagement with citizen-participants will hold much strategic significance beyond its immediate local context.

In sum:

Instead of being largely confined to the margins of an organization, the evolution of participation initiatives is in fact heavily dependent on the 'internal' power dynamics within the organization's hierarchy. Paradoxically, top-down support for more-inclusive, less-hierarchical modes of organizing (or a lack thereof) significantly affects both (1) the front-line interactions through which concrete participatory efforts take shape and (2) the extent to which such efforts have any impact beyond the settings in which they take place.

In short, 'top-down' central leadership support continues to make or break participatory efforts, even those that try to move beyond established hierarchies.

As a general theme that cuts across these different findings, my research highlights that citizen participation should not merely be treated as a matter of organizational design or as a 'technical' solution to organizational or governance problems. Instead, my findings show that, even when a broad range of actors subscribes to an abstract policy imperative that supports the participation of a given constituency (whether this concerns citizens, clients, shop-floor employees or some other group of actors), its translation into everyday organizational practices remains an uncertain, contested and often messy process. Participatory efforts are subject to ongoing debate as people negotiate the appropriateness

of participants' positions. Therefore, understanding participation requires a sensitivity to its situated and ambiguous character, as one's status as an insider in one setting (e.g., on a designated platform for participation) will not necessarily be recognized within another setting (e.g., within decision-making processes). Meaning different things to different people and affecting people's work in a variety of ways, participation is indeed fraught with ambiguity and controversy. While this notion is in itself increasingly recognized in extant literature (e.g., Barnes et al., 2003; Contandriopoulos, 2004; Martin, 2008a), scholars have yet to flesh out how to untangle such convoluted participatory processes.

By revisiting the first three sub-questions posed in the beginning of this thesis, I have provided a fuller picture of the everyday dynamics and implications of citizen participation's contentious nature. In short, my study highlights three areas in which actors bargain over the boundaries that circumscribe participatory efforts and their organizational consequences. To begin with, actors quarrel over (1) what participation is about. Faced with an inherently diverse set of perspectives on 'appropriate' citizen participation, organizational actors try to reconcile or otherwise deal with these different perspectives in the process of enacting participation. By (de)politicizing competing accounts, they may challenge a dominant approach to participation or, alternatively, attempt to neutralize these very challenges. In addition, actors also negotiate over (2) who is considered a legitimate participant. In that vein, my analysis highlights the tenacious propensity to establish 'constructive collaboration' as the appropriate form of participation, thereby marginalizing critics who fail to adhere to this norm. Moreover, a third contentious aspect is (3) how citizen participation impacts the organizational practices participants set out to influence. My findings reveal the paradoxical role of internal hierarchical support in realizing meaningful cross-boundary engagement: 'top-down' management involvement (or a lack thereof) can either make or break the significance of participatory initiatives. In sum, only when we engage in a power-sensitive analysis of these three interconnected areas of contestation are we able to demonstrate how participatory initiatives may or may not reconfigure the (power) relations between the actors involved in organizing care—or in any other context in which the participation of alleged outsiders is pursued. Likewise, these analyses help us untangle the intended and unintended ways in which such initiatives unfold, as they may contribute to participants'

emancipation within the organizational order or, alternatively, as they may legitimize decisions that have already been made or transfer responsibilities to those who choose to participate.

7.4 THE NORMATIVE DILEMMAS OF CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

So far, I have not explicitly touched on a pressing normative question that underlies the processes this thesis has tried to untangle; i.e., which forms of citizen participation are considered desirable? What kinds of relationships between citizens, provider organizations and governments are worth pursuing? And by which values should the pursuit of participation be guided? Not surprisingly, the answers to these questions are neither self-evident nor uniform.

In some cases, it may be possible to identify participatory practices that most people deem undesirable. Lee and Romano, for example, show how professional consultants 'market' public deliberation as a strategic tool for organizations that seek to demobilize dissent about retrenchment, redevelopment and reorganization (Lee & Romano, 2013). The authors describe the strategic efforts with which 'citizens are invited to act as if individuals are co-equal to powerful organizations in their ability to effect social change—a hopeful prospectancy that does not reflect, but may reinforce, currently existing relations of power' (Lee & Romano, 2013, p. 749). Similarly, some organizations that invite participation may not at all be interested in enabling people to actually influence how services are planned or delivered, but instead aspire to 'cure' participants of their undesirable perspectives or make use of 'free' citizen labour (Arnstein, 1969; Ward-Griffin & Marshall, 2003). In such cases, participation may take on a manipulative character, running counter to the empowering or democratizing potential for which it is hailed and therefore considered generally undesirable.

Often, however, participatory initiatives elude such unambiguous normative conclusions, instead producing a myriad of unexpected and unintended consequences. My case study provides a good case in point. Clearly, the eventual outcomes of the process I investigated were undesirable: after a long trajectory in which the town's inhabitants had been mobilized and engaged in a joint effort to keep the care home up and running, these same inhabitants were left disempowered and dissatisfied with the decision to close the facilities. But does

this mean—not having known these outcomes at the onset—that the joint initiative should not have been pursued in the first place? Contrary to Lee and Romano's case, many employees of the provider organization that initiated the process did not appear to engage citizens for self-serving motives only. The trajectory's main proponents seemed to act, at least in part, on their own convictions that citizens should gain more control and ownership over the services provided within their community. Halfway through my fieldwork, they appeared to be succeeding in their efforts to keep the facilities open. Only towards the end of my time in the field, as the organization's leadership changed and its dominant strategic course shifted, were actors forced to abandon this scenario. In other words, despite the 'good intentions' of the participatory initiative's advocates (i.e., of democratizing and fostering local ownership over service governance), their efforts eventually produced the opposite, and unintended, result: the unilateral decision to sideline citizen-participants and shut down the care home. So how should this case be evaluated?

While it is hard to provide a clear-cut answer to this question, my analysis reveals some of the key normative dilemmas surrounding citizen participation. While the development of 'appropriate' ways of dealing with these dilemmas lies beyond the scope of this thesis (such an exercise should be done by the policy and field-level actors directly or indirectly involved), the following will further explicate and explore these dilemmas in order to enable others to also identify (and subsequently deal with) them. In particular, I will elaborate on three key dilemmas that emerged in my study below.

First, *to what extent are participatory efforts allowed to fail and at what costs?* My case analysis highlights the potentially experimental character of citizen participation pursuits, particularly in settings where the availability of local services is at stake. In such cases, both citizens and employees of provider organizations are at risk of substantially investing in what may eventually turn out to be, as it did in my study, a fruitless attempt at preventing the closure of a care facility. In this particular case, for instance, beginning with the first provider-initiated public meeting, the participatory process lasted over two-and-a-half years. In that period I observed almost 30 meetings in which citizens interacted with the organization's representatives, and these meetings constituted only a part of both citizens' and employees' invested time and energy. If there is a reasonable

chance that citizens' invested time and energy will prove futile, is it ethical to still pursue their participation? Scholars have highlighted the frustration among citizens when organizations invite their participation but eventually fail to respond to their concerns—in the process contributing to a sense of 'participation fatigue' and fuelling mistrust of governmental or other public service agencies (Barnes et al., 2004; Fung, 2006; Lowndes & Sullivan, 2008). Paradoxically (and cynically), however, such frustration may at the same time be defused by the very same participatory processes, as these can also 'cultivate stakeholder empathy for decision-makers' (Lee & Romano, 2013, p. 733). Either way, the events observed in my study give reason to call on both citizens and 'inviting' organizations to be frank and explicit about the various possible scenarios within a participatory trajectory, including those in which citizens' participation will eventually be unrewarding. This is easier said than done, also because citizens' motivations to participate may rely on their belief that their efforts will not be futile. Nonetheless, when care-providing or governing organizations consider initiating a participatory process *it is imperative to critically weigh the risks of the sometimes-inevitable experimental character of such efforts against their responsibility to protect citizens from investing in overly opportunistic or fruitless campaigns.* As no one can know the outcome of such a campaign beforehand, this is a difficult, but nonetheless critical, assessment.

Second, *to what extent is it acceptable for participatory initiatives to rely on a selective group of 'willing' participants?* My case analysis highlights the ease with which representatives of care-providing organizations, as well as participating citizens, may accept and legitimize the marginalization of more critical voices. This raises an important question: is it always desirable, or even necessary, to keep critics 'on board'? While, again, the answer to this question is up to the actors involved in the participatory initiatives, some key dilemmas are worth considering. While working with a selective 'coalition of the willing' may increase the likelihood of a productive outcome, whether in terms of volunteer mobilization or citizens' effective influence on decision-making processes, such single-mindedness may also compromise the 'public' character of the care services under scrutiny. As explained in Chapter 5, banking on a coalition of the willing may (perhaps unintentionally) imply an acceptance of the 'inherent parochialism' (Gittel, 2001 in Taylor, 2007, p. 312) of individual participants. As a result, informal barriers

may emerge that compromise the abilities of particular citizens (e.g., people from marginalized groups, citizens with fringe perspectives or those who are antagonistic towards 'the government' or 'big institutions') to join participatory processes or even access public services. Nevertheless, a certain degree of participant selection—i.e., the inclusion of some citizens and the exclusion of others—is an inescapable aspect of any participatory effort (Barnes et al., 2003; Contandriopoulos, 2004). My case analysis gives *reason for explicit reflection on: (1) the extent to which a participating 'public' can sufficiently represent a 'public interest', (2) the extent to which such representation is necessary and (3) the consequences of particular (groups of) actors being excluded from participatory processes.* When such questions are left unaddressed, participatory efforts may result in undesirable and unconscious degrees of particularism.

Third, *to what extent is it desirable for private provider organizations to initiate and facilitate citizen participation when only a limited amount of checks and balances are in place?* In my study, both the initiation and termination of the participatory process were direct results of decisions made by the central management team of a (private, not-for-profit) provider organization. Given that citizen participation did not rest on a formal mandate, there were barely any checks and balances through which the organization could be held accountable by the people whose lives were most affected (an issue more extensively discussed in the context of the Dutch care sector by Nies and Minkman (2015); also see Dedding and Slager (2013) or Baur and Abma (2011) for a critical discussion of the limited influence of formal client councils). Whether or not there was any space for participation to begin with, let alone whether citizens' concerns would actually be considered within formal decision-making processes, was largely at the mercy of the provider organization's leadership. In other words, and more generally, a considerable power differential exists (and persists) between the different actors involved in a participatory trajectory. Consequently, without proper checks and balances, private organizations maintain ample space to act opportunistically, putting citizens in a particularly vulnerable position—especially when they are already facing the potential termination of local services. This notion may encourage the development of ways in which citizens, in addition to their informal engagement, can also be granted a stronger position within the formal governance of care services (see, for example, Nies & Minkman, 2015 for

a reflection on such innovation). For example, a formal mandate may increase citizens' capacities to shape the course and impact of a participatory process. Granting citizens a stronger formalized position in the governance of services, however, by no means guarantees an adequate handling of the dilemmas described here (Allen et al., 2012). (Also see Abma and Baur (2014) for a critique of 'procedural' approaches to participation in the context of user involvement.) Moreover, there is a risk in formally institutionalizing citizen participation given that such participation is (at least in part) elicited as a response to an allegedly over-institutionalized bureaucratic system of service governance. In any case, if the current upsurge of citizen participation endures, and if private provider organizations retain an important role in its pursuit, then it is pertinent we explore alternative accountability mechanisms capable of redressing the unequal power positions of these organizations vis-à-vis participating citizens. Such accountability mechanisms would need to *navigate the tension between, on the one hand, making sure that participatory efforts are connected to the formal institutional frameworks that participants sets out to influence while, on the other hand, preventing such frameworks from 'colonizing' the spaces in which participation takes place, making sure they don't undermine citizen participants' potential as a democratic counterpoise.*

Reflecting on the above, these three dilemmas expose a broader tension that is germane to public service governance: the need to create space at the local level for innovation and personalized services while simultaneously upholding collective standards and guarding public interests (e.g., affordability, equal access, quality and sustainability). Citizen participation may provide a means to ensure decision-making processes continue to revolve around the concerns voiced by citizen-participants but it does not provide a way to fully escape or solve these dilemmas. Paradoxically, pursuits of more inclusive governance always come with a degree of particularism as the inclusion of some actors inherently entails the exclusion of others (Porter, 2013). Participatory processes, therefore, while often initiated in the name of safeguarding 'the public interest', remain dependent on other governance mechanisms to make sure these public interests are indeed served (or, at the very least, not harmed).

In conclusion, my case findings should caution academics, policy makers, managers and practitioners not to turn a blind eye to the limitations and

pitfalls of participation. While some may claim that 'citizens have [...] replaced gods and monarchs as the final source of political authority' (Contandriopoulos et al., 2004, p. 1580), my thesis highlights a number of key dilemmas that cannot be addressed by turning to citizen participation alone; i.e., that actors must deal with (1) the potentially experimental character of participatory initiatives and the risk of citizens' investments proving futile, (2) the limits on participation's inclusiveness and (3) the precarious alignment of citizen participation within the institutional frameworks it simultaneously strives to change.

7.5 BOUNDARY WORK: IMPLICATIONS FOR STUDIES OF INSIDER-OUTSIDER RELATIONS

The theoretical relevance of my case study's findings goes beyond the field of citizen participation. My analysis of boundary-work processes contributes to a broader understanding of the dynamics through which actors within organizations (or teams, departments, etc.) renegotiate their relations to actors who are considered 'external'. In this section, I will answer the fourth sub-question posed in the beginning of this thesis. First, I will briefly explain what my theoretical approach entailed before elaborating on how my research contributes to our understanding of boundary work and insider-outsider relations.

> *(4.) How do actors' disparate boundary enactments (a) interact over time, (b) interact across different locales and (c) interact within the established power relations between those actors whose respective positions are under scrutiny?*

As a theoretical starting point for my analysis, I rejected the assumption that boundaries, at least on a theoretical level, act as clear-cut demarcations of an inside and an outside. Instead of seeing boundaries as real 'things' that can be 'worked on', my analysis focused on the disparate, sometimes-contradictory ways in which boundaries were enacted as people negotiated the parameters of alleged-outsiders' engagement. Compared to existing boundary approaches, this allowed me to more explicitly account for the (1) processual, (2) dispersed and (3) political dynamics of such insider-outsider relations. First, my approach

to boundary work is explicitly processual given that I analyzed the sequences in which people demarcated and attached meaning to different 'sides', potentially triggering others to enact alternative boundaries. Second, I have drawn attention to boundary work's dispersed character: how are disparate boundary enactments across different locales (dis)connected? And third, by taking such a processual and situationally specific angle, I was able to more fully capture boundary work's manifest, latent and often-hidden political dimensions, thereby exploring how boundary processes may both reflect and affect established power relations. By shedding light on the temporal, dispersed and political qualities of boundary-work processes, my analysis contributes two main insights to current boundary-work literature.

First, my research explains why popular pleas to 'knock down the walls that separate us from each other on the inside and from our key constituencies on the outside' (Hirschhorn & Gilmore, 1992, p. 4) may, paradoxically, give rise to intensified boundary work, including efforts to re-erect divisive barriers. On the one hand, the involvement of alleged outsiders in 'internal' work processes suggests a situation in which 'part of the relevant environment is internalized' (Child, 1997, p. 58), thereby increasing the ambiguity of what (and who) is considered external and internal to an organization. On the other hand, this by no means implies that organizations are developing into a state of 'boundarylessness' (Hirschhorn & Gilmore, 1992) or that boundaries lose their significance in structuring organizational life. In fact, the opposite seems closer to the truth (Hernes, 2004; Sturdy, Handley, et al., 2009). Even when outsiders have been effectively involved in an organization's activities, such involvement is far from fixed or absolute. The exact parameters of outsider engagement provoke ongoing negotiation. Actors may re-erect boundaries in an attempt to protect their personal interests or professional turf, or to re-instate what they see as an appropriate state of affairs. Others, in turn, may again (re-)efface boundaries—and so on. Further contributing to these dynamics, the boundaries enacted in one locale may not be recognized or reinforced in other social settings, leading to potentially contradictory boundaries being enacted within different organizational settings—for example, on different organizational platforms. This may again trigger contestation. A focus on such sequences highlights the essentially processual and dispersed nature of boundary work. Studying boundary work as situated dialectical processes of boundary

opening and boundary closing helps us appreciate how boundaries, even when actors try to transcend them, continue to 'reflect the essence of organization' (Santos & Eisenhardt, 2005, p. 505).

Second, my case study shows that, paradoxically, the viability of attempts at 'non-hierarchical' organizing continues to depend on ongoing hierarchical support. The attempted transcendence of established hierarchical positions does not mean that power asymmetries between actors become irrelevant. Instead, established power imbalances continue to shape actors' relationships across and beyond the organizational hierarchy. Even when outsider engagement has been endorsed by formal policies and successfully pursued within local participatory processes it remains vulnerable to the whims of central actors' priorities. In my case study, internal organizational politics had a considerable impact on the processes of outsider engagement. Initially, top-down support for boundary effacement enabled citizen-engagement advocates 'on the ground' to indeed soften the organizational hierarchy and efface barriers between citizens and employees. In contrast, the withdrawal of such support later legitimized those employees who had erected boundaries as more-pronounced barriers, thereby reinstating the organization's hierarchical order. Moreover, even when citizens were granted influence within the newly erected local platforms for engagement, this did not guarantee that their input would actually reach central decision-making agendas. These observations illustrate how the strategic significance of local participatory efforts continues to rely on hierarchical enforcement and support. Whereas some scholars have argued that activities 'in the boundary sphere [...] become un-owned, un-assignable and, as a result, quite unmanageable' (Vakkayil, 2012, p. 207), my study demonstrates how these allegedly 'un-owned' activities are in fact shaped by ongoing power dynamics.

What, then, does this tell us more generally about attempts at inclusive, 'post-bureaucratic' forms of organizing? Research from other empirical fields also highlights how pursuits of ostensibly egalitarian organizing continue to be linked to ongoing manifestations of hierarchical control. My current approach to boundary work, which suggests a power-sensitive analysis of boundary-enactment sequences within and across multiple organizational platforms, can provide a fruitful strategy for studying the various ways in which actors try to 'span' or 'transcend' boundaries. Let me give some examples of possible alternative

fields of application. First, research on employee participation in organizational change efforts shows how attempts to move across hierarchical lines may still 'result in existing asymmetrical power relations being accepted and normalized' (Thomas & Hardy, 2011, p. 325). Furthermore, and secondly, studies of teamwork (e.g., Chreim et al., 2013; Finn et al., 2010) have shown that despite teamwork's 'egalitarian rhetoric' (Finn et al., 2010, p. 1152) power inequalities continue to shape both teamwork dynamics and a team's position within its broader organizational hierarchy (Barker, 1993). Third and lastly, while inter-organizational networks are regularly hailed as a non-hierarchical pathway towards cross-boundary alignment and 'joined-up' service provision, the dynamics within (and the impacts of) such networks remain heavily mediated by the existing organizational hierarchies within each respective member-organization (e.g., Albers, Wohlgezogen, & Zajac, 2016). In each of these empirical fields, there lies the risk of idealizing inclusive and egalitarian modes of organizing. My current approach to boundary work helps to untangle how exactly hierarchical power dynamics continue to shape the evolution of such inclusive organizing, for instance, by triggering intensified boundary work or exclusionary effects.

In sum:

My approach to boundary work highlights the delimited and often-contested scope of attempts at inclusive and more-egalitarian organizing. It contributes to our understanding of why such attempts by no means result in a state of 'boundarylessness' or in the effacement of hierarchical order. Instead, my research shows that pursuits of inclusiveness and cross-boundary engagement present its advocates with an ongoing challenge: the need to reconcile their 'post-bureaucratic' engagement on cross-boundary platforms with the power play that continues to ensue within existing, shifting or newly established organizational orders.

In short, attempts at effacing organizational divides are themselves

subject to circumscription, which in turn intensifies and increases the salience of actors' boundary work.

Before suggesting avenues for future research on citizen participation and, more generally, on inclusive modes of organizing, let me first discuss the methodological implications of my current conceptualization of boundary work. An ability to appreciate the processual, dispersed and political character of boundary work asks for flexible methodological strategies that maximize researchers' exposure to the boundary-work sequences that shape insider-outsider relations. In order to empirically observe local boundary dynamics, including how they relate to those found throughout the broader organization, I have subscribed to Van Hulst and colleagues' (2017) plea to ethnographically follow people, things and issues as they travel across different locales. Understanding insider-outsider relations requires researchers to expose themselves to the 'front-line' negotiations that take place between alleged insiders and outsiders, but also to the 'internal' meetings in which organizational members negotiate the extent to which such external alignment effectively impacts organizational (decision-making) processes. Doing so allows us to follow the connections and incongruencies between the various boundaries enacted by different actors and within different organizational settings. Traversing dispersed-yet-connected empirical sites provides the empirical groundwork necessary for investigating '"macro" phenomena as the result of the association between local instances of ordering' (Nicolini, 2009, p. 1395). In other words, it helps us capture how boundaries gradually emerge from social interactions while still recognizing how these interactions are, in turn, conditioned by the boundaries that have been enacted earlier and/or elsewhere.

Concrete attempts at following people, things and issues are often mediated by people in powerful positions within the study setting (as described for the current study in section 2.3). In that sense, boundary-work scholars are themselves forced to perform boundary work within their empirical fields—by trying to distinguish between those sites, actors and activities that seem more or less relevant to their study while continuously negotiating their own abilities to access these. If we fail to either obtain sufficient access or generate adequate exposure to the dispersed manifestations of boundary processes—e.g., if we fail

to capture how seemingly productive 'front-line' interactions cease to have an effect within other organizational settings—then we only succeed in painting a partial picture and may, consequently, draw misleading conclusions about the character or impact of participatory efforts. To prevent such errors, the 'following fieldworker' needs to be ready to empirically move in directions unforeseen prior to entry in the field.

7.6 AVENUES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Like any study, the research presented in this thesis has its inherent limitations. In Section 2.5.3 of this thesis, I already reflected on how my methodological strategy and position as a researcher in the field affected this study's empirical scope. In this current section, I will reflect on the extent to which my research findings can be applied to other settings and, accordingly, suggest relevant avenues for future research into both citizen participation and the theoretical field of boundary work.

My ethnographic approach enabled me to generate an 'up-close' account of the multi-faceted and contentious character of citizen participation. As a consequence, most of my research findings have emerged from a single case study of citizen participation around a rural-based care facility in the Netherlands. While I expect the trade-offs and dilemmas that I encountered to be relevant beyond their particular case setting, I certainly cannot (nor do I aspire to) claim that other participatory initiatives are likely to demonstrate a course of events similar to the case featured in this thesis. The processes I studied have been shaped by the particularities of their empirical context. A defining feature of this context, for example, was the lack of a formal mechanism by which participating citizens could hold the provider organization and its employees accountable for their actions—a dynamic that eventually left the citizens powerless against the central management team's unilateral decision to close the facility. In order to move beyond this particular case setting, a fruitful path of study could be whether (and how) the same trade-offs and dilemmas might surface within differently situated pursuits of participation, i.e., when they unfold against a background of different relationships and actors. Such studies may help us grasp the extent to which the trade-offs and dilemmas discussed here are indeed integral to all pursuits of participation and, should that prove the case, to explore the variety of

ways actors choose to deal with them.

One interesting avenue for such comparative research may focus on the dynamics of participatory efforts that are initiated and led by citizens themselves. More specifically, the Dutch long-term care sector has recently witnessed the emergence of initiatives in which participating citizens have gained formal ownership and control over (some) services provided within their communities. Particularly in more-rural areas, growing numbers of citizen cooperatives have either taken control of local care facilities that were previously managed by 'regular' professional provider organizations or established entirely new facilities (see, e.g., Turnhout et al., 2016; Van Der Klein et al., 2013). Compared to our current case setting, citizen participation and its impact on service governance may, in these contexts, be less dependent on the goodwill of (professional) organizations that 'invite' participation. Furthermore, most of these citizen cooperatives already have local roots and have incorporated mechanisms to keep themselves accountable to their constituencies. Nonetheless, this does not mean that the dilemmas encountered in my research are suddenly off the table. Nor does it mean that the public's interest is legitimately and unambiguously represented within these citizen-led initiatives. Even when citizens are in formal positions of control, these new 'citizen-governors' still face a diversity of (sometimes competing) local demands, including their potential trade-offs with more collective considerations such as equitable divisions of scarce resources. There is no reason to assume that citizen cooperatives, which face similar if not the same challenges of representation, are able to fully escape such trade-offs or the risks of parochialism. Citizen cooperatives are not a-political.

That said, a comparison of the dynamics between citizen-led versus provider-initiated cases may produce relevant insights into the promises and pitfalls of more 'radical' forms of citizen participation. For example, such comparative studies may demonstrate whether citizen-led initiatives indeed face similar challenges—likewise having to deal with the trade-offs and dilemmas inherent to public service governance—while also, perhaps, suggesting alternative solutions. When leadership positions are occupied by citizen-participants, do 'civic' interests become less prone to being watered down or being cast aside in the face of competing considerations (e.g., austerity policies, formal quality standards, etc.)? And to what extent do citizen-led initiatives demonstrate a similar

tendency to establish 'constructive collaboration' as the norm for participation? Are they more likely or able to keep critical voices 'on board'? By comparing the dynamics of such different manifestations of participation, we would gain a more comprehensive insight into the potential merits of participatory initiatives without sliding back into uncritical accounts that portray them as a panacea for 'fixing' problems with local service governance.

Moving on to my theoretical inquiry into boundary work, how might future research enhance our understanding of pursuits of 'inclusive' organizing? A fruitful direction may be to investigate such pursuits within settings that are marked by (power) dynamics and actors' relationships different than those observed in the current study. In the research setting central to this thesis, citizen-participants lacked a formal mandate over the organizational processes they set out to influence. The possibility of citizen participation being cast aside by the organization's management, therefore, had been hanging over the trajectory like a sword of Damocles since day one. In the end, the issues that were subjected to cross-boundary interactions (e.g., the decision of whether or not to close the care home) continued to be controlled by actors on one 'side'.

Markedly different relational dynamics may be found when studying, for example, inter-organizational service delivery networks (e.g., Ferlie & Pettigrew, 1996; Goodwin et al., 2014; Provan, Nakama, Veazie, Teufel-Shone, & Huddleston, 2003). While such networks may still be characterized by power differences between participants, it seems reasonable to expect to find different boundary-work dynamics than those observed in my current study. On the one hand, for example, these networks' inter-organizational character implies that network activities may be shaped by the multiple 'internal' hierarchies within participants' home organizations—i.e., the number of 'swords of Damocles' hanging over a network's proceedings may be multiplied. How do network members deal with such potential precariousness? While my current study has shown the already-intricate dynamics surrounding citizen-participants who seek to influence the actions of a single organization, one may expect even more convoluted boundary dynamics within inter-organizational networks. Generally, network participants aspire to influence the course of action of multiple organizations simultaneously—all the while depending on both the willingness and the efficacy of individual network participants to successfully reconcile network activities with the internal

dynamics of their respective 'home' organizations. On the other hand, network participants may be—at least when compared to the citizen-participants within my current study—more capable of 'pushing back' when fellow participants fail to sufficiently follow up on agreements made on inter-organization platforms. In other words, they may use other strategies to hold other participants accountable when they fail to translate network activities to their respective organizations. A key question, thus, becomes: how do network participants leverage (or, alternatively, neutralize) the impact of network activities across their organizations' internal hierarchical boundaries? Building on my current boundary-work approach, such investigations may provide an entry point for scholars of inter-organizational networks to move beyond network-level (i.e., inter-organizational) explanations only (e.g., Provan, Fish, & Sydow, 2007; Rodríguez et al., 2007) by paying due analytical attention to the intra-organizational dynamics that continue to mediate network activities.

In conclusion, by expanding my boundary-work approach to other empirical fields, future research can enhance our understanding of people's pursuits of inclusive, 'post-bureaucratic' and boundary-crossing modes of organizing. How do such pursuits relate to the hierarchical orders that continue to impact everyday organizational life? Such research would shed new light on the allegedly increasing fluidity of boundary conceptions and insider-outsider relations. How do organizational actors, who want to make sure that their particular interpretations of who and what 'matters' within an organizational setting proliferate, continue to exercise power despite hierarchy-effacing imperatives? If this doctoral thesis has shown anything it is that attempts to 'transcend' established organizational divides often do not settle, but rather intensify actors' boundary work, sometimes in unforeseen and intricate ways—ways that deserve further social scientific scrutiny.

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THESIS SUMMARY

Citizen participation:
Bargaining over boundaries
in the organization
of care services

Hailed as a way to grant citizens more control over the services they may use, advocates often portray citizen participation as a crucial ingredient for service improvement. At the same time, and despite widespread support for participation as a policy imperative, its pursuit often proves contentious. Critics consider participatory efforts to be something of a Trojan horse, noting that they are often used to legitimize decisions that have already been made or compensate for cutbacks in public spending. In this doctoral thesis, I investigate how these disparate accounts of citizen participation—and the organizational practices associated with them—interact within concrete participatory efforts. How do participatory initiatives evolve as people bargain over participation's parameters?

Empirically, my study examines the micro-processes in which employees of professional long-term care organizations in the Netherlands deal with their organizations' policy ambition, together with their colleagues and participating citizens, to create more space for citizen participation. In doing so, I deliberately move away from clear-cut normative definitions of what participation is or should be. Instead, I investigate participation as an emergent and contentious organizational phenomenon. By zooming in on how employees and citizens translate abstract policy ambitions into concrete participatory practices, I explore how they reconcile competing notions of 'appropriate' participation. At the same time, I also zoom out to show how such practices interact with actors' interests, normative dispositions and various positions of power in order to reveal participation's deep embeddedness within other organizational dynamics.

By studying how participation pursuits challenge actors' established relationships and positions within the governance and delivery of care services, my thesis sets out to answer the following research question:

How do actors (re)define insider-outsider relations as they negotiate the emergence, parameters and significance of alleged-outsiders' participation within an organizational setting?

As a theoretical foundation for my inquiries, I approach participatory efforts as instances of boundary work, i.e., by focusing on the inclusionary and exclusionary actions people use to open up or narrow down the space available for participation. From this perspective, I study how people negotiate which issues fall within or beyond the realm of participation, which actors are considered insiders or outsiders to a given organizational setting and the extent to which participation effectively impacts work practices across an organization's hierarchy and across positions of authority. I investigate such boundary processes up close, relying on ethnographic methods that allow me to follow how participation is gradually redefined among a range of actors and on various organizational platforms. In addition to observing how actors negotiate their relationships and mutual involvement in newly erected platforms for participation, I study how such 'front-line' developments both reflect and affect the dynamics of 'internal' organizational politics among a broader range of employees. In short, by untangling the sequences of boundary work observed on multiple organizational platforms, I am able to investigate the processual, dispersed and political dynamics of how actors bargain over participation's concrete parameters and implications.

My key findings can be structured along the three areas in which people delimit and negotiate the scope and impact of citizen participation: issues, actors and authority. To begin with, when pursuing participation, people quarrel over (1) which issues are considered pertinent to such participation. As such, I show how organizational actors face an inherently diverse set of perspectives regarding the 'appropriate' scope for participation. By politicizing such competing accounts, these actors may attempt to challenge the dominant approach to participation, which in turn results in the opening up or narrowing down of the range of issues open to participants' scrutiny. Alternatively, by depoliticizing alternative perspectives—i.e., by portraying them as 'the other side of the same coin'—these same actors may instead try to neutralize other actors' attempts to challenge the status quo. Importantly, actors also negotiate over (2) who is considered a legitimate participant. Accordingly, my analysis highlights the tenacious propensity to establish 'constructive collaboration' as the appropriate form of participation, which results in the 'legitimate' marginalization of critics who fail to adhere to this norm. Furthermore, as my research shows that actors also bargain over (3) the impacts of citizen participation on work practices

across the organizational hierarchy, I illuminate the paradoxical role of internal hierarchical support in realizing meaningful cross-boundary engagement: 'top-down' management involvement (or a lack thereof) can either make or break the significance of participatory initiatives. In sum, only when we engage in a power-sensitive analysis of these three interconnected areas of contestation are we able to demonstrate how participatory initiatives may or may not reconfigure the relationships and power dynamics found between the actors involved in organizing care—or between actors in other fields in which the participation of alleged outsiders is pursued. These analyses help us untangle the ways, both intended and unintended, in which such initiatives unfold and how they contribute to participants' emancipation within the organizational order or, alternatively, how they legitimize decisions that have already been made or transfer responsibilities to those who choose to participate.

Cutting across these different findings, my research highlights how important it is for scholars, policy makers and practitioners to not merely treat participation as a matter of organizational design or as a 'technical' solution to governance or organizational challenges, but instead to foster an awareness of the uncertain and contested nature of its translation into everyday organizational practices—even when its ambitions are supported by a broad range of actors and its intent is to 'democratize' service governance. Because their efforts inherently entail the inclusion of some actors and the exclusion of others, and because participants' status as an insider in one setting (e.g., on designated platforms for participation) may not be recognized in other settings (e.g., within decision-making processes), processes of participation are intrinsically messy. Moreover, given that the impact of participation is, to a large extent, negotiated outside the arenas designated for such engagement, participation advocates should not only expect to have to 'play' on multiple 'chessboards' at the same time, they should also make concerted efforts to engage with actors who may not be natural proponents of citizen participation. By calling into question who and what 'matters' within an organization, participatory efforts are by no means apolitical. Understanding participation and its consequences, therefore, requires a sensitivity to the emergent, contentious and often-messy micro-dynamics through which participatory processes evolve.

On a theoretical level, my boundary-work approach draws attention

to the delimited and often-contested scope of allegedly egalitarian pursuits of cross-boundary engagement, including their (possible lack of) significance to the organizational processes their advocates set out to influence. By highlighting the intricate and often-unanticipated boundary-work dynamics that unfold over time and across multiple sites, my study helps show how attempts at non-hierarchical, post-bureaucratic organizing in no way result in 'boundarylessness' or in the effacement of hierarchical order. In fact, and paradoxically, inclusionary efforts tend to evoke exclusionary effects (and vice versa) as actors contest 'appropriate' insider-outsider relations. By untangling the kaleidoscopic to and fro of boundary effacement and boundary erection, my study sheds light on the power dynamics that continue to shape people's attempts to 'transcend' organizational boundaries—even when those attempts explicitly try to move beyond established organizational hierarchies.

SAMENVATTING

De burger de baas?
Kwetsbare pogingen om de
zorginstelling te 'democratiseren'

Burgers worden regelmatig uitgenodigd om mee te denken en mee te doen bij het inrichten van het lokale zorgaanbod. Zulke participatietrajecten hebben soms substantiële invloed op hoe de zorg eruit komt te zien. Soms blijft de inbreng van burgers echter zonder gevolgen. Hoe zijn zulke wisselende uitkomsten te verklaren? In mijn proefschrift onderzoek ik het streven van professionele zorgaanbieders om burgers actiever te betrekken bij het organiseren van hun diensten. Ik laat zien hoe gevestigde grenzen in de zorg hierbij ter discussie worden gesteld, maar toon daarbij ook de kwetsbaarheid van participatietrajecten—zelfs wanneer deze worden gesteund vanuit zowel de zorgorganisatie als de betrokken burgers.

In de wetenschappelijke literatuur en het maatschappelijk debat wordt regelmatig gewezen op de bijdrage die actieve burgers kunnen leveren in de strijd tegen vermeende tekortkomingen in de zorg en andere (publieke) voorzieningen: doorgeschoten bureaucratie, aanbodgerichtheid en paternalisme. Participatie zou de zorg kunnen 'democratiseren' door burgers meer controle te geven over de voorzieningen waar zij zelf of hun naasten mogelijk gebruik van maken. Vaak klinkt er echter ook een ander geluid. Critici wijzen erop dat participatietrajecten evengoed de positie van burgers kunnen ondermijnen. Overheden en professionele organisaties zouden burgers vooral betrekken bij beleid- of besluitvormingsprocessen om hun eigen legitimiteit te versterken, zonder daadwerkelijk iets met de geleverde inspraak of de opgehaalde inzichten te doen. Het werken aan de 'participatiesamenleving' zou vooral een eufemisme zijn voor het afwentelen van publieke verantwoordelijkheden. Hoe zijn deze uiteenlopende perspectieven te rijmen?

In mijn proefschrift onderzoek ik hoe pleitbezorgers voor burgerparticipatie proberen om hier binnen hun eigen zorgorganisatie meer ruimte voor te maken. Ik onderzoek hoe diverse opvattingen over wat participatie is – of wat het zou moeten zijn – samenkomen binnen participatietrajecten in de langdurige ouderenzorg in Nederland. Ik baseer me op een etnografische studie waarin ik

twee zorgorganisaties langdurig heb gevolgd terwijl ze invulling gaven aan hun beleidsambitie om ruimte te creëren voor burgerparticipatie. Gedurende twee-en-een-half jaar observeerde ik zowel 'interne' overleggen als bijeenkomsten met participerende burgers, en sprak ik met medewerkers, burgers en andere partijen die bij deze trajecten betrokken waren.

In mijn analyses benader ik burgerparticipatie als grenzenwerk (*boundary work*). Ik bestudeer hoe zowel burgers als medewerkers van zorgorganisaties grenzen opwerpen, hertrekken of juist doorbreken terwijl ze afbakenen wat participatie volgens hen juist wel of niet behelst. Waar gaat participatie precies over (en waarover gaat het niet)? Wie worden er gezien als legitieme participanten (en wie niet)? En in hoeverre weet de input van burgers de daadwerkelijke besluitvormingsprocessen te bereiken? Daarbij kijk ik naar de frontline van participatietrajecten: de rechtstreekse ontmoetingen tussen participerende burgers en vertegenwoordigers van de organisaties die hen hiertoe uitnodigen. Tegelijkertijd onderzoek ik de 'interne' dynamiek binnen deze organisaties: hoe creëren (of blokkeren) medewerkers onderling mogelijkheden voor betekenisvolle burgerparticipatie?

Mijn bevindingen leggen de dynamiek bloot waarmee burgerparticipatie al dan niet tornt aan de gevestigde verhoudingen bij het organiseren van een zorgvoorziening. Terwijl burgerparticipatie vaak wordt nagestreefd in een poging om de strikte scheidslijn tussen burgers en besluitvormers in de zorg te doen vervagen, schetst mijn onderzoek een ander beeld. Als burgers worden betrokken bij zaken die voorheen werden gerekend tot het domein van professionals, managers en bestuurders, dan worden grenzen juist onderwerp van soms verhitte discussies.

Om te beginnen geeft mijn onderzoek inzicht in hoe betrokkenen grenzen stellen aan (1) de kwesties waarover participatietrajecten al dan niet mogen gaan. Ik bespreek daarbij de verschillende perspectieven die bestaan op 'gepaste' burgerparticipatie. Terwijl actieve burgers door sommigen vooral als uitvoerende vrijwilligers worden gezien, benaderen anderen ze juist als gelijkwaardige partners die betrokken moeten worden bij besluitvormingsprocessen. Mijn proefschrift laat zien dat de interne machtsdynamiek binnen een zorgorganisatie voor een belangrijk deel bepaalt welke interpretatie van burgerparticipatie uiteindelijk dominant blijkt.

Vervolgens laat mijn onderzoek zien hoe burgers en medewerkers betwisten (2) wie er al dan niet kan worden gezien als legitieme deelnemer aan een participatietraject. Medewerkers die tot participatie uitnodigen en burgers die op deze uitnodiging ingaan zijn afhankelijk van elkaars erkenning voor het legitimeren van hun eigen posities. In de praktijk kan dit ertoe leiden dat constructieve samenwerking (in plaats van kritische oppositie) al snel tot norm voor participatie wordt verheven—een norm die kan bijdragen aan het buitensluiten van meer kritische burgers.

Tot slot laat mijn onderzoek zien hoe er grenzen worden gesteld aan (3) de mate waarin de inbreng van burgers wordt meegenomen in besluitvormingsprocessen binnen de hiërarchie van een zorgorganisatie. Met andere woorden, heeft burgerparticipatie ook daadwerkelijk gevolgen voor hetgeen dat burgers proberen te beïnvloeden? Waar burgerparticipatie vaak bij uitstek wordt gezien als een niet-hiërarchisch organisatieprincipe, toon ik juist de paradoxale rol van hiërarchische steun vanuit het bestuur of management. Mijn onderzoek laat zien dat burgers in een dubbelzinnige positie kunnen belanden als deze steun ontbreekt of wegvalt: zij groeien uit tot betrokken partners in de overleggen waaraan zij deelnemen, maar vervullen een marginale rol in de uiteindelijke besluitvorming. De nieuw verworven status van burgers als 'gelijkwaardige partners' wordt elders in de organisatie niet zomaar (h)erkend.

Al met al laat mijn proefschrift zien hoe belangrijk het is om burgerparticipatie niet uitsluitend te zien als inrichtingsvraagstuk of als technische oplossing voor bestuurlijke of organisatorische uitdagingen. Zelfs als een brede groep medewerkers en burgers elkaar goed kan vinden op het abstracte beleidsvoornemen tot burgerparticipatie, blijft de concrete invulling van dit voornemen vaak omstreden. Participatietrajecten kunnen zich daarbij op onverwachte of onbedoelde manieren ontwikkelen. Ik laat zien dat het cruciaal is om ook de interne organisatiedynamiek mee te nemen in onderzoek naar burgerparticipatie. Hiermee ontstaat een vollediger en realistischer beeld van het verloop en de effecten van participatietrajecten. Het laat zien waarom het streven naar participatie ondanks welgemeende intenties toch kan eindigen in het buitensluiten van betrokken burgers. Het wegvallen van hiërarchische ondersteuning hangt daarbij als een zwaard van Damocles boven het 'democratiseren' van de zorginstelling. Steun van bovenaf blijft veelal bepalend

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